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188. i. 187.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO.,
CITY ROAD.

Lo! from the eastern hills the Lord
Descends in lowly state ;
Let us go out with one accord,
And where He passes, wait.

Prepare, with willing hearts and true,
Glad hymn and garland gay :
O joy ! if He should look on you,
And with His kind voice say,—

“ I hear thee, and it is My will,
By thee to perfect praise ;
I have a place for thee to fill,
Have marked thy times and ways ;

“ I, in the music of the blest,
To thee a part assign,
Only do thou sing out thy best,—
I call thee, be thou mine ! ”

Thine heart would beat full high, I know,
If Jesus on his way,
Had turned aside to greet thee so,
Thy very soul would pray.

But mark Him well one moment more,
Behold the Saviour weeps ;
He weeps, while heaven and earth adore
Through all eternal deeps.

Why weeps He ? for His people's sin,
And for thy follies all ;
For each bad dream their hearts within,
These tears the bitterer fall.



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I.

Introductory Chapter.

B

Jesus ! Name of priceless worth,
To the fallen sons of earth,
For the promise that it gave,
“Jesus shall His people save ! ”

Jesus ! Name of mercy mild,
Given to the Holy Child,
When the cup of human woe
First He tasted here below.

Jesus ! Only name that's given
Under all the mighty heaven,
Whereby man, to sin enslaved,
Bursts his fetters, and is saved !

Jesus ! Name of wondrous love !
Human name of Him above ;
Pleading only this we flee,
Helpless, O our God, to Thee.

W. W. H.

ISA. XXV. 9.

"We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

HOW full of loving-kindness is our God. He is pre-eminently a God of salvation. To save, to rescue, and sanctify human souls is His delight. He would rather plunge himself into the deepest abyss of pain and suffering than leave unsaved whom *He* can save. "As I live," He saith, with an oath, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."† And how faithful was this oath Bethlehem has shown—and Gethsemane—and Calvary!

If every creature on earth understood and believed this glorious truth, the whole world would be transformed into a concert-room, from which would be sent forth one grand

* Psalm lxviii. 20.

† Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

symphony of praise and adoration. To no other purpose is it that the Holy Spirit calls up the inhabitants of this globe. “ Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth,” He crieth. “ Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.”*

Why?

“ Because,” He says, “ the Lord hath made known His salvation†; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”‡

It must be a joyful thing, which is worthy of being thus celebrated by the whole creation. It must be a source of infinite and unparalleled pleasure, which causes a whole earth thus to thrill with delight, and to burst into strains of exultation.

Well, so it is; God be praised that, through Jesus Christ our Lord, there *is* such a thing for this world of ours as a salvation! And again I say, God be praised that this salvation comes from Him, and not from man.

* Psalm xcvi. 4—8. † Ver. 2. ‡ Ver. 3.

Were it not for this great and glorious truth, no creature here below would have one truly joyful moment, nor would one truly joyful sound ever be heard from the lips of any human being. What the light of the sun is to the visible creation, what the atmosphere is to natural life, what a refreshing draft is to the thirsty, and bread is to the starving, that God's salvation is to the soul of every child of man! Without Christ, all life would end in death, every song turn into a dirge, every paradise wither into a wilderness; but with Him, through Him, and in Him, the grave itself becomes a fountain of light and glory, the desert blossoms as the rose, the thorn makes room for the fir-tree, and the brier for the myrtle-tree.*

Now, if there is a soul in distress—any one sighing under the weight of a heavy cross, a sufferer tormented by the pains of an accusing conscience, or of a sick body; if there are loving ones mourning by the grave of their life's treasure, or a stricken one sitting down

* Isa. lv. 13.

in despondency by the ruins of his fortune ; let all such come and listen. There still remains a fountain of joy for every one of you, if you will but believe it, and go and draw refreshment out of its wells. What you need is salvation, deliverance from your misery, redemption from your pains and troubles, from the pangs of conscience and the fear of death. Well, what you want can be obtained. There is such a salvation. One has been sent by God, whose special *office* it is to save, whose *delight* it is to save ; and to save just such helpless, hopeless, comfortless ones as you. Jesus is His name, and His voice from heaven whispers down to you : “ O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.” * “ With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” †

There is not one amongst us who does not stand in need of that great unspeakable gift. We are all, by one means or other, seeking

* Isa. liv. 11.

† Isa. xii. 3.

joy, having none of our own. Alas! there is nothing with which we children of men are more familiar than with grief and suffering. We come into the world with pain; we walk through it amid trial; and we leave it in agony. A wise man, who had experience of more than a hundred years, once said that this life's "strength is labour and sorrow."^{*} And another wise man, who occupied the most glorious throne an earthly king ever sat on, and had made trial of this life's strength in all its fulness, declared that "The day of death was better than the day of one's birth."[†] To young persons, buoyant with health and vigour, these expressions sound somewhat extreme; but these young ones have had no experience of life. Persons, again, who are basking in the sunshine of prosperity, would, perhaps, condemn those expressions as the utterances of a morose and discontented temper. But where the sun of prosperity dazzles the eyes, it is difficult to see this life in its true aspect. This world is like a vast cemetery, where the living

* Psalm xc. 10.

† Eccles. vii. 1.

read their own story on the tombstones of the dead. That story is simply this:—"He had times of prosperity, and he had times of adversity; but the end of it all was—the grave." And between the cradle and the tomb there lies a road planted with flowers and thorns; but the flowers are withered, and the thorns are left, having been moistened with tears, and too often even with blood; and we, all of us, know this right well. There never was a preacher in this world who was not contradicted, save one, and that one is Death. In his philosophy all men agree. We may try to ignore it or to forget it, but we are wiser, after all, than to attempt to deny it. Whether we die to live may be doubted by many; but that we live to die, the most sceptical of men will readily admit.

No wonder, then, that we all long and look out for joy. We feel that we were created for joy; and we might wonder why there is so little of it here below. Our instincts tell us that grief, pain, suffering, and death, are things which originally did not belong to our nature.

We hate them, and strain every nerve to escape from them. We feel that happiness is our true life, and joy our normal element. We cannot help believing that joy is to be found somewhere here below, though we do not know exactly where. We set out in search of it, each one in his own way: this is the cause of all the strife and bustle in the world—of the buzz, the din, and the whirl—all this is caused by the pursuit of that one object—joy. The larger number fancy that it is buried in the ground, among precious stones and metals; others seek it in the region of science and philosophy; not a few plunge into the stream of worldly amusements, hoping to bring up the costly pearl from the bottom of those enchanting waters. Some, again, retire into solitary places, expecting to discover it like a hidden flower, growing unseen of men, in the depths of the desert. Thus the universe has been explored in all directions. Mankind has, from the beginning of the world, been engaged in an expedition in search of happiness. We desire to live, not to die; to rejoice, not to mourn.

There is no human being who forms an exception to this rule.

Why, it is exactly in this that God agrees with us. He is not a God of death and pain, but of life and joy. "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," He says; "I am not a God of the dead, but of the living."* He is the companion of the happy ones, as it is written, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth."† He never came down to bring misery to us. Alas! we know only too well how to make misery of our own. But at the moment He first appeared amongst us, the angels made this earth resound with their songs, and heaven was moved with delight. Poor shepherds, who probably had not seen much joy in their life, glorified and praised God. A venerable grey-headed patriarch, standing, as it were, on the brink of the grave, took the wonderful Babe in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!" The first word that came from His

* Matt. xxii. 32

† Isa. lxiv. 5.

lips when He appeared as a teacher amongst us was a benediction. Blessed are the poor—blessed are they that mourn—blessed are the meek ! They shall be made rich ! they shall be comforted ! they shall be made to rejoice, and to be exceeding glad !* He came not to curse, but to bless ; He found many miserable amongst us, but *He* never made any one miserable. Wherever He appeared, pain and grief, sickness and death, fled away, as the shadows of night flee before the approach of the rising sun. Some wicked enemy might have found pleasure in making people blind, or dumb, or deaf, or cripple : where Jesus saw that evil work, it was stopped at once. It pained Him to see a man having eyes, and yet unable to see the beauties of creation ; having a tongue, and yet unable to praise his Creator ; or having feet, and yet unable to leap for joy in the God of his salvation. Others have found pleasure in killing, He delighted to make the dead alive again. A sacred poet of old had compared the sun to “A bridegroom coming out

* Matt. v. 3—12

of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race.”* Such a bridegroom was He, the Sun of Righteousness. “Why do Thy disciples not fast?” some asked Him. “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?” was the answer.† Everybody who was afflicted, helpless, or hopeless, came to Him, and they all returned rejoicing, being saved and cured. Others might rebuke tender-hearted mothers who brought their little children to Him, but *He* took the little ones in His arms and blessed them. Others might upbraid the multitude who went “rejoicing and praising God, and crying Hosannah!” But *He* answered: “I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” Such was His character when He walked amongst men, and such is His character even now. Peace, happiness, joy—these are the things in which He delights. “Glad Tidings” is the name of the message He came to bring us; and his own name is Prince of Peace—

* Psalm xix. 5.

† Matt. ix. 15.

Prince of Life—Lord of Glory—Jesus—Saviour !

So, if there is any being in the universe who desires that we should be happy and rejoice, that Being is God. What an unspeakable blessing is this ! What would become of us if the contrary were the case ? if His name were not Jesus, Saviour, but Apollyon, Destroyer ? There are nations who believe that among their gods there are some whose delight it is to destroy. No wonder that their priests “cut themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushes out upon the ground.” No wonder that they throw themselves under the wheels of the car which carries their gods, and maim, and mangle, and cripple themselves ; or that they slay their own children, hoping thus to propitiate the terrible Destroyer by destroying themselves in anticipation. We shudder at the mere thought of such things ; yet we do not marvel at them ; for we perceive that nothing but suffering and misery can be the lot of people whose deities are gods of destruction. But what may well

excite our astonishment is, that much of that spirit which is so hostile to all joy and happiness may be found among people who bear the name of Jesus. How many have there been, in all ages in Christendom, and how many are there even now, who believe that they please and glorify Jesus by scourging and wounding themselves, by putting from them all those comforts which God has so mercifully granted to man in this life? How many, even with the Book of the Glad Tidings of Jesus in their hands, seem to suppose that they can in no better way reflect his image than by becoming stern and austere, deeming it almost sinful to smile, and scarcely admitting of any recreation? They strip life of all its beauties and ornaments, and reduce religion to a system of abstract notions and formulas. Though they bear the name of Jesus, they can never have fully realised the meaning of that name, and must have confounded it with that of Moses, “by whom the Law was given;”* or with that of Jonah, who was “displeased and

* John i. 17.

very angry," because Nineveh was not destroyed;* or with that of John the Baptist, who "came neither eating bread nor drinking wine."†

No, indeed; our God and Saviour is not like that. If you desire to be happy, and to rejoice, *He* will not prove your antagonist. Nay, to make such a thing as true happiness possible for you, He left His heavenly throne, and, at the cost of His own blood, removed the barriers that closed the road towards the land of everlasting joy. If He himself counted joy such a very desirable thing, that, to obtain it, He even endured the cross and despised the shame,‡ surely He will not find fault with you for straining every nerve to get possession of the same treasure. He encourages you to run after it with all your might. He impels and encourages you to try to get rid of everything that pains and vexes you, everything that depresses your spirit and paralyzes your energy, that banishes music from your lips and pleasure from your heart. He points you to the

* Jonah iv. 1.

† Luke vii. 33.

‡ Heb. xii. 2.

exceedingly charming and glorious prospect which is in store for you, if you only follow His counsels. He exhausts all the riches of language to depict that land of everlasting joy and happiness, with the glory of which the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared. He bids you constantly to look at it. He entreats you to rejoice at it even *now*, so that by the elasticity of your rejoicing spirit, you may bear your present trials and tribulations as being but “a light affliction, which is but for a moment.” His people can even sing hymns in the “inner prison,” and a doxology in the sight of the “king of terror.”

But agreeing, as He does, with all of us in our aversion to misery and our yearning for happiness, there is yet one point in which, alas! most of us directly differ from Him. It relates to the way by which we may escape misery, and arrive at that true happiness. Most men try to accomplish this through their own power and ability, whereas Jesus says that it can only be attained through Him. This sad controversy, which, unless his opponents turn

in time, must necessarily end in their utter and everlasting ruin, touches the great question, whether Jesus is or is not a *Saviour*, in the true sense of that word. We, in our ignorance, in our pride and wickedness, contend that no such thing as salvation is required, because we are in no danger. We admit that we have our defects, and are often in error, and that, consequently, we are in need of education and instruction. We are willing to agree that among the many teachers who have sprung up amongst us, Jesus has occupied a prominent—nay, the very first place. But that we should be in such a hopeless condition as to require a *Saviour* to rescue us from utter perdition, we are loth to allow. This, however, is the very point Jesus firmly maintains against us. He declares that without Him we are for ever hopelessly lost. He maintains that He did not come down to us merely to train and instruct us, but to shed His blood, and thus, at the price of His own life, to rescue us from eternal destruction. It is quite true that He came to train and to instruct us *also*; and when was training

or instruction ever given equal to his? But He did not take his name from either of *these* capacities. Jesus, which is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, does not mean *trainer* or *teacher*, but *Saviour*, *Redeemer*. To *train* or *teach* a man is one thing; but to *die* for man is another.

But there have at all times been some—and the writer is one of them—who have acknowledged that men were wrong, and that Jesus was right. We know and feel that our condition is such, that a man who is merely a teacher cannot avail us. What we need is a Saviour. Training and instruction are excellent things if carried on in the right spirit; but they are of little use to a culprit who is doomed to be executed next day, or to a bankrupt who is about to be imprisoned for debt. A voice within us cries that one day we shall have to appear at the tribunal of an almighty Judge and King, whose holy and eternal laws we have recklessly trampled under foot. Experience tells us that, by our own guilt, we have brought upon ourselves the evils which every

day destroy God's works within and around us, and that we shall be held responsible for all the consequences !

How shall we escape ?

There is but one answer to this question : Jesus—Saviour !

GLORY of Thy Father's face,
Fountain deep of love and grace,
Who, Lord, can repay Thee thus
As Thou gav'st thyself for us ?

What to Thee shall we reply,
Who for us didst bleed and die,
When Thou shalt the question make,
“ What have ye done for My sake ? ”

Hard in heart, in action weak,
Lord, Thy grace divine we seek :
Set us from our bondage free ;
Draw us, and we follow Thee.

H. A.



II.

A Truthful Saviour.

My Friend is truest tenderness,
My Friend me in my grief doth bless :
Earth, sky can nought so sweet unroll
As His dear image in my soul.

Like to a star His voice me guides,
While round me darkness deep abides ;
I hide glad in His loving breast,
And tempests trouble not my rest.

A high and holy peace is mine,
When other hearts in anguish pine ;
And, should all earthly succour fail,
My Friend's right arm can me avail.

My Friend divine and I are one,
Our bond can never be undone :
Though gorgeous sun and starry sky
Should sink in space, grow dim, and die.

Patient I march to heaven's gate,
For there my Friend doth watch and wait :
My cross shall change like His, and wave,
Triumph's bright banner, o'er the grave.

And though in death too weak to praise
In words His wise and wondrous ways,
I shall Him feel, in that grim strife,
The Resurrection and the Life !

G. T.

JOHN viii. 40.

"A man that hath told you the truth."

THERE can be no doubt that we are the dupes of a sad self-deception. This is the cause of our fatal quarrel with God. We deny the *truth*, because it testifies against us. It is true, that in our controversy with God we apparently admit a great deal; but we refuse to draw from the facts that we admit such inferences as honesty demands. We refuse to admit *all* the truth as it is seen before God, and would be seen by His angels or any impartial witness. We rely upon our own wisdom, because we think it is based on good grounds.

In this we deceive ourselves. The grounds upon which we build our wisdom are flesh and blood. We think that things are, in reality, such as we conceive them by *our* understanding, or as we apprehend them by

our feelings. But we overlook the truth that our understanding is darkened,* and that our feelings are liable to deception.† We forget that we are prone to “measure ourselves by ourselves, and to compare ourselves among ourselves,”‡ not bearing in mind that there is an infallible standard *without* ourselves by which we must be tested. Even with regard to disputes between man and man, it has been well observed by a wise judge and king, that “he that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but that his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”§ What then is to be expected when *God* cometh and searcheth us? We may think a great deal of our understanding, but there is One of whom it is said: “His understanding is infinite; there is no searching of it.” We may deem our knowledge very extensive, but there is One whose “eyes are in *every* place, beholding the evil and the good.” Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the

* Eph. iv. 18. † Gal. vi. 3. ‡ 2 Cor. x. 12.

§ Prov. xviii. 17.

eyes of Him with whom we have to do.* Of a truth, things are not as *we* see them, but as *He* sees them. We may easily be led to cry out : “ Peace, peace ! ” But if He says there is danger, it behoves us to stop and consider.

It was most merciful in God to send His Son to us, to tell us how *He* sees things, and thus to undeceive and enlighten us. And, truly, when a Saviour comes to the rescue of such as through ignorance and foolishness are walking in a way of destruction, the first thing He has to do is to acquaint them with the awful peril of their condition. He could not be a true Saviour if He failed to do that. Can a man be brought to turn back unless he be told that he is in the wrong way ? And can a man believe that he is in the wrong way, unless he be convinced that it ends in awful disappointment and ruin ?

A certain nobleman was one day sitting in his garden on the top of a hill, from which he could survey a large sweep of landscape. Suddenly he noticed a knot of persons walking

* Prov. xv. 3 ; Heb. iv. 13.

up a beautiful road, which *he*, from his elevated position, saw would only lead them into a desert place where, in the darkness, they would certainly be exposed to great danger. He at once dispatched his servant on horseback to acquaint them with the fact, and to lead them back into the right way, which they had lost through ignorance and neglect of their guides. But, instead of thanking the servant for his trouble and the master for the kindness, they quarrelled with him because *they* saw no danger. The road was beautiful, and the guides insulted the servant, because they were too conceited to acknowledge their error. On the following day it was discovered that the whole of them had perished that night in a bottomless abyss.

And what was the cause of their death ?

Their foolishness and pride. They relied wholly on what *they* saw. They did not believe that the man who sat in the high place could see their road better than they themselves who were walking below.

We all like sheep had gone astray, we had turned every one to his own way. But He

“that sitteth in the heavens” saw our course and what it must have led us to; and He sent His Son to us to warn us, and lead us back to life. Jesus came amongst us “a man that told us the truth.” He did not judge after the sight of his (human) eyes. He told us what *God* saw. He reproved us not after the hearing of *his* ears, but according to what his *Father* had given Him to say. “If I do not the works of my Father,” He said, “believe *me* not; but if I do, though ye believe not *me*, believe the works.”* But we quarrelled with Him, and our guides—the Priests, the Pharisees, and Scribes—insulted and reviled Him, and at length even killed Him. We refused to believe his words. *He* did not know the way; *we* knew it better. *He* had a devil and was mad, but *we* were good people and held wisdom itself in trust.

Why did we not believe on Him?

He answers this question himself: “Because I tell you the *truth*, ye believe *me* not.”†

If He had told us falsehood we should have

* John x. 37, 38.

† John viii. 45.

believed Him, for falsehood was what we delighted in. We wanted to be deceived into believing that we were on the right way ; that we might go on as we had done from the beginning ; that there was no necessity for turning back, neither for breaking down what we had built up with no little trouble and toil. It is true, there was nothing but falsehood in all that, but still we delighted to hear it, and it angered us to listen to the truth. For the truth was, that we were self-deceived and lost ; that, being rebels, we had spoiled everything, and were under the sentence of death—registered unto condemnation. The truth was, our religiousness was but tinsel, and our righteousness but filthy rags. While we showed much love with our mouth, our heart went after covetousness ; while crying, “The temple of the Lord ! the temple of the Lord !” we worshipped idols at home and in secret. But, of course, we do not like to hear the truth told in regard to all this. It was too shameful, too alarming.

Had Jesus come to please himself, He would

certainly have tried to please us ; and would not have said a word about that disagreeable truth. But He came neither to please himself* nor to please men. He came to *save* us ; and, therefore, nothing was left to Him but to tell us plainly what was the truth with regard to our condition ; for there is, and can be, no salvation in falsehood. He knew that His truth-speaking would cost Him his life, but what Caiaphas, through the Spirit, prophesied from selfishness, he realised through love, considering that it “was expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” Had He only held his peace, He would have been allowed to go unmolested. But how *could* He ? He loved us too well for that. He *saw* our danger too clearly. Would He not have hated us, had He not told us ? To *save* is to suffer. This has ever been the maxim of God, as assuredly as that of man has been, that to sin is to be happy.

What a noble, sincere, self-denying Saviour ! Yet, even the best of us were, at one time, so

* Rom. xv. 3.

blind in our spiritual vision, that we were somewhat at a loss about Him. Though we loved and admired Him as a man, yet, our understanding being darkened, we could not comprehend how He, against whom every one arose in opposition, could possibly be right. Surely, He *must* have been mistaken. We have fancied He must have overdone things, and been a little of a fanatic. Such were the thoughts which passed through the minds even of his own friends. His mother and brethren on seeing the excitement He aroused, went out to lay hold on Him, for they said: "He is beside himself!"* John the Baptist sent his disciples to Him from the prison, saying: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"† Cleopas and his friend said: "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel."‡ Many of his immediate disciples murmured and said: "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"§ Thus at last they all forsook Him, and He was left alone. So

* Mark iii. 21, compared with ver. 31. † Matt. xi. 3.

‡ Luke xxiv. 21. § John vi. 60.

utterly unpalatable to us was the truth He had come to bring us.

And is it possible, then, that, being as we were, we did not admit that there was much of which we desired to be delivered, and for which we were in need of a Saviour ?

Very much indeed ; but we did not reckon amongst that, the very evil from which *He* came to save us in the first place. We desired to be delivered of distress, of pain, of disease, of poverty, to be free from the oppression of such tyrants as Herod, and from the thraldom of such masters as the Romans. We desired to be a healthy, prospering people ; to be rich, living in peace, and unharassed by care. Nay, we would even have liked to be undying, and to get our departed friends back from the grave, to know nothing of such dismal things as deathbeds, shrouds, or graves. An everlasting spring of earthy and earthly happiness—that was our highest aspiration. And if, instead of seeking to set our spirits free, He had brought us all that, we should doubtless have hailed Him with jubilation.

And He never said that He would not bring all that to us. *He* was not by any means a lover of pain and sickness. *He* was no friend of Herod, nor an ally of the Romans. *He* opened graves, but never dug them. *He* did not rejoice at His friend Lazarus being buried in the dust; He wept and brought him to life again. If ever any one has shown his aversion to death, *He* has. In fact, He has promised to bring us *all* that we desired, and infinitely more than we could think or pray. He promised us nothing short of a new heaven and a new earth, of which we ourselves were to be “the priests and the kings;” in which “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither crying, neither any more pain.” So about *these* things there was no controversy between Him and us. He quite agreed with us there. But how to obtain them! *That* was the question. And here lay the root of the difference between Him and us.

What was the cause of our evils and sorrows? It was not Herod. It was not the Romans; nor disease, nor death, nor the grave. It was

sin. The evil *within* us was the cause of all the evils *without*. We ourselves were bad; no wonder then that all that issued *from* us was wrong and miserable. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? We had abandoned God. We had fallen from the source of life. We had taken part with the Evil One in his opposition to God. We were filled full of self-love, and were void of the love of God. We only cared for our own profit, our own glory, our own pleasure, but were indifferent to the cause of God, to the glory of God, to the pleasure of God. Nay, we were more than indifferent, we were averse and hostile. We took pleasure in that which God hated—in breaking His laws and commandments, and in provoking Him to anger. Thus we had brought upon ourselves the verdict of death, and filled the world with hatred and violence, with war and blood-shedding, with blasphemy and foolishness. What would it have availed us, if, in this state of things, Jesus had taken disease and death from us; if He had removed all our miseries, and restored this earth

to a state of paradisiacal glory? Would this have lasted for so much as a single day? The *cause* of the evil not being removed, what could be the use of removing its effects? Purge a bad tree of its poisonous fruits—will *that* make it bear good fruits the next summer? Fancy a new earth clad with the glory of an everlasting spring, in which there is no pain, no disease, no death, but peopled by a generation of sinners, who love themselves, and hate God and their neighbours! Can there be a more monstrous absurdity?

Yet men in all ages have tried to realise this same monstrous absurdity. To be happy in enmity towards God, to be free in the service of sin, to rise to honour and glory under the leadership of the power of darkness—that is the goal at which most of us invariably have aimed in our struggles for social and political reform, for emancipation, for liberty, for happiness. Had Jesus tried to assist us in these attempts, He would not have been a Saviour, but a deceiver and a destroyer.

But He was a Saviour, who came to save

indeed. Therefore He took the evil at the root. He came to "take away the *sin* of the world."* *That* was the ground on which He bore His name. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," the angel said to Joseph: "for He shall save His people from their *sins*."† This was as it were his programme. Praised be His name, He faithfully stuck to it. The most splendid offers were made to Him, if He would only abandon it, and consent to save us from every thing *except* from sin. He absolutely declined them. He had not come to be made king in the place of Herod.‡ He had not come to receive the kingdoms of the Roman empire at the devil's hand.§ He had not come to be ministered unto. He had come to give His life a ransom for many,|| to seek and to save that which was lost,¶ to shed His blood for the remission of sins.** So He took up His cross and walked the thorny path. He was laughed at, mocked at, reviled, buffeted, condemned as

* John i. 29.

† Matt. i. 21.

‡ John vi. 15.

§ Matt. iv. 9.

|| Matt. xx. 28.

¶ Matt. xviii. 11.

** Matt. xxvi. 28.

a fool, ridiculed as a madman, hunted as an outlaw, and executed as a malefactor. But all this was powerless to make Him step so much as an inch aside from the way which led to the object *He* had in view. The top of Calvary was the point to which He steered his course. For *there*, only there, He could save us from our sins.

Truly, He was right and we were wrong ! We see it clearly now, since He hath given us His spirit to understand the truth. We see it, by the light of His resurrection, by the emblems of His broken body and shed blood. We sink down at His feet in wonder and adoration, and we say : “ Precious Saviour ! We thank Thee that Thou didst not seek the things that were of men but those that were of God ! Hadst Thou given us what we desired, we should be lost now. *We* were blind. *We* did not know our true misery. But *Thou* knewest it, Thou who wert wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ! ”

My Saviour, whose infinite grace
Most kindly encompasses me,
Whose goodness more brightly I trace,
The more of my life that I see,—
The sins that I mournfully own,
Thy meekness and mercy exalt ;—
And sweet is the voice from Thy throne
That tenderly shows me a fault.

Even now, while my praises arise,
A sorrowful spirit is mine ;
A spirit Thou wilt not despise,
For, oh ! it is mourning with Thine.
My joy is in light from above,
The light which Thy kindness displays ;
My grief is for lack of the love
That would tune my whole life to Thy praise.

My faithful Redeemer, forgive
The sin it has grieved Thee to see ;
And let me remember to live
In the spirit that glorifies Thee.

Though much in Thy child thou hast borne,
Thy counsel still gently repeat;
And give me, if still I must mourn,
To mourn as a child at Thy feet.

A. L. W.

III.

A Saviour of Sinners.

Jesus, the friend of friendless men,
The help of all the weak ;
Jesus, who left the joys of heaven,
The lost and sad to seek,—

Jesus, Thy love has found my heart,
And raised it up to Thee ;
Jesus, that love doth feast my soul,
'Tis present heaven to me.

Jesus, Thy death my life doth prove,
Thy cross to thrones doth bring ;
Jesus, Thy crown shall be the crown
Of all who own Thee King.

O ! rule me by Thy love, my Lord,
Thy love to me when dead ;
The love so passing all my thought,
That for my love it bled.

Jesus, I long to yield my love
In deeds that shall Thee praise ;
Jesus, I long to live that love
Through life of endless days.

1 TIM. i. 15.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

TWO great mysteries are here expressed in a few words—the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity.

God was manifest in the flesh to save his enemy. This is the mystery of godliness. Who can fathom it?

Man, created in the image of a holy and perfect God, became a sinner to insult and dishonour his Maker, and to ruin himself. Who can understand it?

Evil is a great mystery. It is a fact, but no one can explain it. It is in the universe ; but how it *came* there, how it originated, how it could originate in the sight of a Holy and Almighty God—who can tell? The Word of God declares that it existed before man was created ; that God created man without

it; that it was introduced into this world by an evil being, who succeeded in seducing our first parents; and that thus “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”* But how it could be that that evil being should succeed in such a thing, how it was that he could exercise such a baneful influence over man, is a question to which neither God’s Word nor human reason gives any answer.

Again, the Word of God tells us that this evil being himself was once good, living in the truth; but that he did not *abide* in the truth, but fell off from God, and became an enemy of the Holy One, a seducer of others, and a murderer of men.† He set up a kingdom of evil, of darkness, which is peopled with angels who followed him as their chief and king.‡ But how it could be possible that that being, who once was good, should become evil and the father of lies, is again a question concerning which Revelation is silent, and philosophy is unable to give any solution.

* Rom. v. 12.

† John viii. 44.

‡ Matt. xii. 26; xxv. 41.

And, though an answer to this question might satisfy our curiosity, it would not alter the fact. Discussions about the origin of evil are as useless as they are wearisome. The evil is here. It is round about us; it is within us. There is another question which is more worthy of our attention—a question of life and death to each of us—how to get rid of it?

God be praised through Jesus Christ our Lord, in that to this question His Word gives us a full, all-sufficient answer. That answer is: JESUS! SAVIOUR! “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that He came into the world to save sinners; that He was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”*

There are, comparatively speaking, few men who understand and recognise the all-surpassing importance and deep blessing of this answer. Most men, alas! do not see the necessity of a Saviour. They believe, or, at least, hope, that death will deliver us out of all evil; they believe that as long as we are on

* 1 John iii. 8.

earth we ourselves may do much towards fencing in and lessening the power of evil; but, as to its final extinction, they doubt whether it will ever be witnessed here below—and they suppose that when a man dies he will, somehow, get rid of all evil.

But the Word of God tells us that death itself is an evil. Not only is death not a saviour—it is an enemy.* The representation, so current in the sentimental world, of death as “a messenger of peace,” is true only to those who are saved by the great conqueror of death. Apart from this, it is a cruel deception. What the real work of death is none of us know from experience. It is true, we know what becomes of the body after its separation from the soul; and that, indeed, is something horrible. But what becomes of the soul after it has left the body, we know not. We may set up various theories about the state of the departed. We may fancy that state an annihilation, a quiet sleep, or an Elysium of enjoyment. But, to tell the truth,

* 1 Cor. xv. 26.

we know nothing about it. It is all theory, hypothesis. But it is known by God, who is the God of the spirits of all flesh.* And He tells us that what takes place with the body is only one and the less fearful side of death's work; that there is also a death of the soul, which is an everlasting death, not a state of annihilation, or of insensibility, but of eternal woe and misery, which it is impossible to picture in words borrowed from human language. God nowhere speaks of death as a deliverer from evil, but as the consummation of the work of evil. It is the wages and reward of sin. It is compared to a poisonous scorpion, armed with a sharp sting.† It is spoken of as a messenger, not of peace, but of terror, ready to carry the departed soul to a place described by such figures as "utter darkness, a burning lake, weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It is easy to pooh-pooh these descriptions of death as old wives' fables, or to slight them as hallucinations of uncontrolled Eastern fancy; but it is not so easy to prove their incorrectness.

* Num. xvi. 22.

† 1 Cor. xv. 55.

We should consider well before we allow ourselves to play with a matter like this. God assures us that death is such an awful evil, that, without a Saviour, it is sure to destroy us, both body and soul, with an everlasting and irreparable destruction. We may, on the authority either of our own wisdom, or of that of others, venture the passage through the dark valley without a Saviour. But we should mind that the experiment can only be made once. If, on our arrival at the opposite side, we should, to our horror, find out that we are mistaken, there will be no chance of our returning, and taking a fresh start.

Jesus came “to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* To effect this, He came to save us from sin; for sin is the cause of death, and until sin is taken away death *must* reign. Death is not a natural production of creation. The shudder that instinctively passes through our frame at the

* Heb. ii. 14, 15.

thought of it proves that it is something utterly repugnant to our nature. We can never be brought to feel that we were created to die. We can fancy ourselves to have been created with the destiny of passing over from the present creation to a higher one, as, for instance, was the case with Enoch and Elijah ; but that a God of love, who in all His works displays such delight in everything good, and lovely, and beautiful, should have created us for the purpose of being tormented by the most fearful agonies, and of being reduced to the horrible condition of a corpse—our intellect, as well as our feelings, revolts against the idea. Nor does the Word of God fail to testify to the contrary. It is true, that there was a fatal object—a tree of death—in Paradise. But, for whatever purpose it may have been planted there, this much is certain, that it was not planted by God for the purpose that man should eat of it. “Thou shalt *not* eat of it.” Thus sounded the warning voice of a loving, careful Father. “Thou shalt not eat of it,” lest thou diest. Plenty of other trees, all

good, were given for food, and the Tree of Life in the midst of them. But, as to one tree, that tree of death, none could be more anxious that man should never touch it than God was. *He* did not desire to see His creature destroyed. He had so skilfully framed him out of the dust of the ground, and so wonderfully united to it a soul issuing from His own divine breath. *He* did not wish to see that which He had so admirably united put asunder by violence. “Thou shalt *not* eat of it!” was the royal command, the friendly warning, the paternal entreaty. And the reason is clearly and emphatically given: “*For* in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!”

The grave word was spoken in vain. Our first parents transgressed. The human race then became a generation of sinners, poisoned with the poison of death. Nearly six thousand years have elapsed since then. Times, customs, opinions—in short, everything has changed and changed again; but two things have remained as they were from the begin-

ning—sin and death. They hold their own place up to this moment. What was said eighteen hundred years ago may be repeated now without the slightest modification: “We offend *all*.^{*} We are *all* gone out of the way.[†] We have *all* sinned, and come short of the glory of God.[‡] We all die in Adam.[§] It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment.” ||

These sentences are, without exception, applicable to all of us. Whether kings or beggars, judges or culprits, sinners we are, and die we must. The names “sinner,” “mortal,” are synonymous with that of “man.” We are so accustomed to see sin committed, and to commit it ourselves, that we look upon it as essential to our nature. Only where it shows itself in too gross a manner, where it threatens to interfere with the order, the peace, or the security of society, do we condemn it. But, as long as it keeps within what we call “due limits,” we are at peace with it; nay, we are

* James iii. 2. † Rom. iii. 12. ‡ Rom. iii. 23.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 22. || Heb. ix. 27.

often even pleased with it ; so that we wonder in our hearts why a Saviour should be required, except, of course, for the publican and the harlot, the thief and the murderer.

Thus we get accustomed to look upon sin merely as an imperfection. We call it “a defect,” “a fault,” which, we say, belongs to our nature, since we are destined for development. We reason that, just as little as a child can learn to walk without often stumbling, so little can a human being develop itself into perfection without sinning. Sin is not an evil for which we require a Saviour ; it is only a weakness that requires exercise and instruction.

It is quite natural that we should reach such a judgment. We never saw man in his blissful original condition before he became a sinner. We know of no human beings but such as are infected with sin ; and so it does not occur to us that man *might* exist without it. Of a perfectly holy, pure, and faultless man we have no conception, because we have never seen such a one. If such a person appeared

amongst us, we should hardly believe him to be a human being.

Indeed, such a person did once appear amongst us ; He proved that it *is* possible to be a man without being a sinner ; He proved that development is possible *without* sinning ; He grew up from a babe to a youth, from a youth to a man ; He ate and drank and slept like every one of us ; He was placed in the most trying circumstances, and in heaviest temptations ; but, always and everywhere, He remained without sin.

Did His appearance cure us of our mistake ? Did it alter our judgment about sin and the sinner ?

Not in the slightest. The contrast between Him and us was so enormous, that we knew no place for Him amongst us. "He was no man," we cried out, "except such a one as had a devil. He was a madman. He was not a specimen of sinless humanity, but, on the very contrary, *the sinner by pre-eminence.*" We crucified Him between two malefactors as the greatest of the three.

And what did this show ?

It showed that we had got so accustomed to regard sin as the *rule*, that sinlessness, as it presented itself to us in Him, made upon our minds an impression of monstrous absurdity. It is said that the negroes when they saw a white man for the first time were stupefied with fright, thinking that he was the devil. And thus we, on seeing a sinless man, started back with horror, as if He were Sin itself. Through sin our moral vision was so distorted, as to make us see things inverted. The crooked line being laid down as the rule, how could we do otherwise but condemn the straight?

No wonder then, that so long as we look at matters in this light, we cannot see the necessity of a Saviour; but, the very fact that God, in his infinite mercy, has given a Saviour, proves that He looks upon sin quite differently. To Him it is a capital crime, a pernicious hostile power, and a fatal disease.

A capital crime. We like to represent God in the image of a Father, who, with kind forbearance, looks down upon us as His children.

In that light, our sins look to us as only child-like failures, which may be chastised with the rod of correction, but will never be punished with the sword of justice. Nor is there anything wrong in this representation to those who, through Jesus, have “ received the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father.” But, apart from Him, the doctrine is utterly false. God is the Judge of all his creatures as well as their Creator, and man is no exception to this rule. No sooner had man committed his first sin than God passed the sentence of death upon him. This is not the work of a father, but of a judge. This is not chastisement with the rod of correction ; but punishment with the sword of justice. With this capital sentence, God at once showed how *He* looked upon sin. It is the transgression of his holy law, the violation of which is followed by the forfeiture of life ; it is the violation of His holy, supreme majesty, the defilement of which can be as little permitted on earth as it can in heaven. *We* may regard an offence against His sovereign will as a trifle ; but *He*

cannot allow His honour to be trifled with. Subsequent events in the history of our race have more than abundantly undeceived us on this matter. Such terrible executions as the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, and the doom of Pharaoh, all tell their awful tale. Nor is there a voice lacking in our bosom to repeat the same. Conscience addresses us as criminals; it summons us before an eternal and just Judge; it makes us feel like convicts under the sentence of death; it tells us that sin is a crime, and that justice requires vengeance. We all shudder at the thought of death; we all tremble at the prospect of the coming judgment.

A pernicious, hostile power. Human philosophy may set up its theories about the necessity of sin, in God's Word there is not one sentence to be found in favour of it. From the first to the last page it is there described as *the* only thing which God hates with a perfect hatred; there is nothing in God that resembles it. He is light; sin is darkness. God never had anything to do with it, nor will He ever

have. It belongs to “the devil, who sinneth from the beginning.”* God can as little brook it in his presence as a man can brook a mote in his eye. There is no place imaginable for it in His kingdom. Wherever it is seen, it spoils God’s work, and, hostile as it is to God, it is also most hurtful to man; it entirely separates him from God. All communion between him and God is broken up, all intercourse stopped. A sinner can as little be admitted to the company of God and His angels as a corpse could be admitted to a wedding festival. Sin sets man down in the boundless desert of misery, at the mercy of the devil and his angels. When Cain was brooding over his murderous plan, God compared sin to a tiger lying and lurking at a man’s door. It was not a requisite for Cain’s development; it was the means to secure his destruction. Sin destroys God’s life in man’s soul. It deprives man of the faculty of thinking God’s thoughts, of feeling after God’s heart, of loving God’s creatures, of doing

* 1 John iii. 8.

God's work. It compels him to think and to feel as the devil thinks and feels : to liye a life of selfishness and pride, and cold, heartless opposition to everything truly good and noble.

A fatal disease. According to the description of sin in God's Word, it is a certain mysterious poison, which has entered the nature of our race through our first parents, being propagated from parent to child through all generations. Though inexplicable to us, we feel it to be a permanent evil within us, which not only infects our mind and spirit, but also our body. It *dwells* in our flesh, in our members, in our bodies.* Through it our bodies are bodies of death. Through it we are shapen in iniquity, and our mothers conceived us in sin.† Through it we bring that germ of decomposition with us into the world, which, passing through a longer or shorter process of varied diseases and pains, at length reaches its consummation in disuniting soul and body. Thus, through sin we have become a fallen, a spoiled, a sick, and dying tribe among the

* Rom. vii. 18, 23.

† Psalm li. 5.

rational beings that people God's universe. Humanity is a poisoned tree, each leaf of which bears the marks of decay, each blossom of which savours of corruption, every fruit of which tastes of death. "The whole world," God's Spirit says, "lieth in the wicked one." And history puts its seal upon this sentence. From the days of Cain up to the present moment, hatred, envy, war, bloodshed, murder, and fratricide, have not ceased among the children of men, nor has death failed to do his horrible work!

Oh, truly what we are in need of is a Saviour; for our condition is hopeless. As there is no one amongst us who is not himself a sinner and a child of death, so there is no one amongst us who is able to save. Human wisdom, science, art, civilisation, social progress, political reform—all these things may have their value in their own sphere; but let us not look to them for help in this fearful danger, which threatens us both in body and soul. Ship-building and navigation are, undoubtedly, most noble and useful arts; but,

when in the midst of the roaring sea the ship is about to go down, nobody expects help from a lesson in ship-building, or from a lecture on navigation. What everybody eagerly looks out for then is a lifeboat which brings *salvation*. And such things as sanitary precepts and regulations are, undoubtedly, most desirable; but when a man is lying in his bed with broken limbs, it is not for a book on hygiene that he cries, but for a physician who is able to *sare* his life. Human science, art, and philosophy may go far in lessening the effects of evil, and in promoting the influence of good here below; but they do not have it in their power to deliver us from the sentence of death, which God's holy and eternal law passes upon us; they cannot renew the life of God in our souls, nor raise our bodies from the grave. When a man's work is lost, man may recover it; but where man himself is lost, who can save him but the God who made him?

And God be praised for His unspeakable gift! He *hath* sent us a Saviour. Here, again, begins the joyful music, after such a dismal succession

of sepulchral tones. Had we fallen into all that misery without our own fault, how ought we to thank Him ! Where, then, shall we find words to praise Him as we should, when it was through our own wickedness or recklessness that we dug for ourselves that bottomless pit ! How justified would He have been, had He left us to ourselves to reap the bitter fatal fruits of our own planting ! He had made this earth of ours so beautiful, so pure, so happy ! He comes to it—and He finds it full of sin, of wickedness, of misery, and destruction ! He gave us life—we turned it into death ; He gave us a paradise—we transformed it into a wilderness ; He gave us a glorious body formed in his image—we changed it into a corpse ; He placed us as kings on a royal throne to rule this earth to His glory—we sold it, together with ourselves, unto His arch enemy, Satan !

Would He have been unjust if He had sealed our doom and death with us as He once did with another tribe of his creatures, who, in like manner, “kept not their first estate,

but left their own habitation," and whom "He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day?"*

But no. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth ! It hath pleased God to make an exception in our favour ! Angels have fallen, and there is no helper ; but for man God hath raised up a Saviour ! † Jesus is his name, the Son of the living God, the God of salvation, the Lord of glory, the Life and the Resurrection ! He left the heaven of heavens, and came down to save us. Make a noise, ye earth, and shout out for joy, ye children of men ! Take an instrument of ten strings ! Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and tell it unto every one : The right Man hath come ! He can do it ! He is able to save ! Unto us a Child is born ! Unto us a Son is given ! Wonderful is his name, and Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace !

And what hath He come for ? To save sinners !

* Jude 6.

† Heb. ii. 16.

DEAR Saviour of a dying world,
Where grief and change must be,
In the new grave where Thou wast laid
My heart lies down with Thee.
Oh, not in cold despair and joy,
Or weariness of pain,
But from a hope that shall not die,
To rise and live again.

I would arise in all Thy strength
My place on earth to fill,
To work out all my time of war
With love's unflinching will,
Firm against every doubt of Thee
For all my future way,
To walk in Heaven's eternal light
Throughout the changing day.

Ah, such a day as Thou shalt own,
When suns have ceased to shine !
A day of burdens borne by Thee,
And work that all was Thine.
Speed Thy bright rising in my heart,
Thy righteous kingdom speed,

Till my whole life in concord say,
“The Lord is risen indeed.”

Oh, for an impulse from Thy love
With every coming breath,
To sing that sweet, undying song
Amid the wrecks of death !
A “hail !” to every mortal pang
That bids me take my right
To glory in the blessed life,
Which Thou hast brought to light.

I long to see the hallowed earth
In new creation rise,
To find the germs of Eden hid
Where its fallen beauty lies,—
To feel the springtide of a soul
By one deep love set free,
Made meet to lay aside her dust,
And be at home with Thee.

And then—there shall be yet an end—
An end how full to bless !
How dear to those who watch for Thee
With human tenderness !

Then shall the saying come to pass
That makes our hope complete ;
And, rising from the conquered grave,
Thy parted ones shall meet.

Yes—they shall meet, and face to face
By heart to heart be known ;
Clothed with Thy likeness, Lord of life,
And perfect in their own.
For this corruptible must rise
From its corruption free ;
And this frail mortal must put on
Thine immortality.

Since then, Thou Resurrection Light
Upon our sorrows shine,
The fulness of Thy joy be ours,
As all our griefs were Thine ;
Now in this changing, dying life,
Our fading hope restore,
Till, in Thy triumph perfected,
We taste of death no more.

A. L. W.



IV.

A Divine Saviour.

THOU, of earth desired, adored ;
 Joy and glory of the skies ;
Thou, my Brother, Saviour, Lord,
 Lo ! I bend before Thine eyes :
O that mild yet awful mien !
Grace commanding, yet serene !
Of Thy gifts the triple dower,
Light, hope, peace, upon me shower.

Long have I my feeble sight
 Strain'd, and nothing met my view :
Long my mind hath yearned for light,
 Fathom'd all, yet nothing knew :
O the blessings thus foregone !
Fleeting lights in vain that shone !
Useless griefs which fail'd to bless !
Draughts of deadly happiness !

Say, my soul, but now forlorn,
 Whence is come this calm to thee ?
Say, my mind, with searching worn,
 How so clearly dost thou see ?
All my doubts, behold, they cease !
Sinks the storm to deepest peace !
O strange mystery of love !
Grace my highest thoughts above !

Greater than all names that are,
 Jesus is our Saviour's name :
Gulfs to fill, which sever'd far
 God from sinners, Jesus came !
To my tongue that Name how dear,
Melting hardness, calming fear ;
Name to make the rebel mourn,
And remorse to sorrow turn !

Heart Divine ! my comfort be ;
 Be my refuge in the strife ;
From the tempest shelter me ;
 Be at death my better life !
See my wound, how deep and sore ;
Heal me,—heal ten thousand more ;
Yea, o'er all this world of woe
Bid Thy boundless mercy flow !

H. D.

MATT. xxii. 43.

“How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?”

IT was not a vain word which God spoke to His prophet when He commanded him to cry, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people!” It was spoken when He was sending His servant to announce the coming of Him on whose appearance Jerusalem was to say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”* Truly, there can be no greater consolation for us who are lost in sin and guilt than lies in the fact that our Saviour is God himself. It guarantees the completeness of our salvation. Were He only an angel, even the highest, there might still be room for doubts as to whether *all* that is required for our redemption were fully accomplished. But now that the mighty Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts himself, has come

* Isa. xl. 9.

to the rescue, what can be imagined which He has left undone ?

We should constantly keep our hearts open for this consolation in the midst of adversities and difficulties, trials and miseries. When the pangs of conscience depress our spirits, when we are like to break down under the heavy weight of the cross we have to bear, when we look despondingly on the ruins of our life's happiness—ruins of which perhaps our own foolishness or perverseness has been the cause,—when we sit down in tears by the death-bed of our beloved ones, or when we see the king of terrors approach to carry us away from all that is near and dear to us, we should say unto our souls, “Be comforted, God himself has come to thy help.” Though sinners, we are not cast out; though guilty, we are not forsaken; though miserable, we are not neglected. To us, to us a Saviour is given in *every* need. And that Saviour is He with whom *nothing* is too hard !

From the earliest period of Christendom the question has been raised, “Why should God

have become man?" Probably there never was a thinking man, whether believer or infidel, in whose mind that question has not frequently arisen. God being almighty, we might at first wonder why, to be able to save us, He should have to go through such humbling and painful processes as the incarnation, the crucifixion, death, and the grave. We might well wonder why the Omnipotent One could not, with only one word of his mouth, have transformed us into holy angels and transported us to heaven.

But such questions are as useless as they are unseemly. We often think and speak about omnipotence, but we know not at all what it is. We would need to be omnipotent ourselves to understand it. If we desire to learn a little about it, we should abstain from asking response from human logic or philosophy, and sit down at the feet of the Omnipotent One himself to be taught by Him. If omnipotence were such a thing as we in our philosophical abstractions fancy it to be, there would be no history, no beginning, and no end—no progress and no

development. Everything would have been done in *one* moment by the power of *one* word, or as it were with the wave of a magic wand.

But there are such things as history and progress, such a thing as development from the small to the great, from the less perfect to the more perfect, though mostly proceeding with slow, scarcely noticeable movement, and often connected with many struggles, reactions, counteractions, battles, defeats, and victories. And all this happens according to a fixed and well-regulated plan under the superintendence and leadership of Him who is—the Omnipotent God. And we learn from that history that omnipotence is not the only attribute connected with doing all these things. *Forbearing* and *suffering*—suffering such things as no other power but one omnipotent could bear; for human experience itself teaches us that sometimes greater power is needed for not doing than for doing. God having, according to His eternal counsels, laid down the laws after which all His works are to be carried on, omnipotence

does not consist merely in the power of suspending these laws or of breaking these rules, but pre-eminently in the power of carrying out His purposes by means of these laws and rules, notwithstanding the opposition of other powers which are temporarily allowed to counteract them. In other words, we learn from Scripture that omnipotence is not the power of displaying the greatest possible *force*, but also of realising the greatest possible *wisdom*, of performing the most perfect *justice*, and of manifesting the greatest possible *love*.

And such being the nature of God's omnipotence, there are and must be things which it is impossible for God to do. As there are things which none but the devil can do, and things which none but man can do, so there are things which even God cannot do, simply because He is God. Had God consulted the devil, He would simply have allowed fallen man to perish; or had He taken counsel with our wisdom, He would have allowed us to continue sinning against His laws according to our own pleasure, and given us everlasting

happiness into the bargain. In the former case He would have displayed justice, but no love; in the latter He would have displayed love (if love it were), but no justice. No omnipotence would have been required to follow up either of these two courses; but to combine perfect justice with perfect love—to fully vindicate the law, and yet to redeem its transgressor—to condemn sin with a perfect condemnation, and yet to rescue the sinner from perdition—that assuredly was a task to which none but an almighty God was equal. Moreover, where the devil had succeeded in bringing about the greatest possible devastation, any power inferior to that of God would have been satisfied if it only succeeded in restoring matters to their former condition. But the greatest possible power was displayed by Him who out of this hopeless ruin called forth a state of things which in perfection and glory rises as high above the level of the original condition as it had, through the devices of the devil, been sunk beneath it. Great power undoubtedly would have been required merely

to prevent the extinction of the human race and to free it from its corruption, without leaving behind marks of the injury sustained. But God has manifested His omnipotence far beyond this by purifying the sinner and raising him to such a height of perfection that he is beyond the possibility of a relapse,* and by sublimating his nature to such a degree of glory as to make him a partaker of the divine nature itself;† to raise him to an eminence beyond even the nature of the angels, and to make him occupy the highest rank next to God in the universe, “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”‡ To lift up a sinner, a servant of the devil, from the bottom of the pit into which he had sunk, and to raise him to the rank of angels, was a work which, if it were possible, might have been understood by angels. But how a sinner, who had fallen below the very lowest rank of rational beings, could be made a *judge* of

* 1 John iii. 9.

† 2 Peter i. 4.

‡ Eph. i. 21.

angels,* a child of God clad in the glory of divine majesty,† a fellow-ruler of the King of kings and Lord of lords,‡ and an heir and proprietor of all things, whether things present, or things to come §—that is a mystery into which even angels desired to look.

Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.

But God hath revealed them unto *us* by His Spirit, for we *know* the things that are freely given to us of God.|| So we remember with unspeakable wonder that most momentous hour in the history of our race when the angel of God entered the house of the royal yet humble virgin, and said to her, “Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. The Holy Ghost shall come

* 1 Cor. v. 3. † 1 John iii. 2. ‡ Rev. iii. 21.
§ 1 Cor. iii. 22. || 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12.

upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Here the union took place of our race with Him who is so much better than the angels as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;* who was the Lord of the angels because the Creator of the angels, and who, passing them all, from the highest to the least of them, came down to us, making himself for a little while† lower than the angels, that He might, through death and the grave, carry us up to the throne before which all angels worship in awe and adoration. Here that wonderful being was called into existence whose name is EMMANUEL (God-with-us, God-with-man, God-man), both the Son of God and the Son of man. Well may the prophet exclaim, “ His name is Wonderful !” Who can fathom the depth or scale the height of it ?

With this event, with the incarnation of God, stands or falls our salvation. If Jesus is not

* Heb. i. 4.

† See the original, Heb. ii. 9.

God manifest in the flesh, if it is true that He either had a father among men, as some assert, or a father among the angels, as others hold, the gospel is no glad tidings to us. We are lost ; we are without hope in the world. The case which is impending between God, our Holy and Almighty Judge, and us, is so important, that no person who is merely a human being like ourselves, though ever so excellent, can tranquillise our trembling hearts. All that such a person can give us, is *his* opinion ; but, what we are in need of, is God's own authentic declaration. All he can do for us is to try to appease our alarmed consciences by smoothing addresses; he cannot blot out the verdict that is declared against us ; he cannot cleanse us from our sins ; he cannot deliver us from death ; he is himself a sinner, a mortal creature like ourselves. How *could* he save us ? He may, by his moral character and exemplary conduct, cause us to appear better than we were, but he cannot make us *good* in the sight of God ; he cannot secure to us the remission of our sins ; he cannot make us heirs of the heavenly glory.

Moreover, the gospel does not speak of a Saviour who is a mere man, or the son of an angel ; it knows nothing of such a Saviour. We may call Jesus just what we like ; but if we deny His divinity, we speak of quite a different person than the gospel speaks of, and it is only on the Jesus of the *gospel* that the Christian Church builds her salvation. It is that Jesus who was born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God ; who truly died, and was buried, but rose again, and was *by* the resurrection from the dead declared with power TO BE THE SON OF GOD.*

It has been observed by those who doubt the divinity of our Saviour, that, except the two narratives in Matthew and Luke, no mention is made of his miraculous birth in the New Testament ; and it is upon this ground that they call the historical truth of these narratives in question. We, on the contrary, regard this absence of any special allusion to that fact in the writings of the Apostles as a

* Rom. i. 4.

proof in its favour. We should deem it strange if men, who wrote to their fellow-believers about Him whom they all adored as the Son of God, pointed at His miraculous birth, as if this were a matter to any of them unknown, or even doubted by them. The simple title of “*the Son of God*,” which they invariably gave to Jesus, clearly pre-supposed such a birth. It is true that, in a metaphorical sense, good men are often called “sons of God,” “children of God,” and in that same sense any pious Christian man may be called “*a son*,” or “*a child of God*.” But, neither in Scripture, nor in any document written by a sensible man, is the title of “*the Son of God*” ever given to a man who is not acknowledged to have through his birth received his existence immediately from God. It was only upon that ground that Luke (iii. 38) could call Adam the son of God. He, too, had no father on earth. Least of all, would pious Israelites, such as the Apostles, have dared to give that title to Jesus had they for one moment doubted whether God was His Father in the true and natural sense of the word

Nor would a pious Israelite have ventured to call God *his* Father. He might, on the track of Isaiah (lxiv. 8), have called Jehovah “*our* Father;” but he would have shrunk from the expression “*my* Father” as from a blasphemy. A man who said such a thing would have been understood to say that he had no father among men, that God was his only Father, that, in a word, he was a divine person. Therefore, when Jesus called God “*his* Father,” the Jews sought to kill Him, because, by speaking in that way, “He made himself equal with God.”* And so most assuredly He did. The Jews were quite correct in their explanation of that title. According to the rules of the language known to every Israelite, there was no alternative but either to kill Him as a blasphemer, or to adore Him as God.

So, when we observe that such conscientious and devoted Israelites as the Apostles call Jesus by the title of “*the Son of God*,” and speak of God as of “*the Father of their Lord Jesus*,”

* John v. 18.

we know from this fact alone that they believed in His miraculous birth—nay, we should from this fact alone know that Jesus *must* have been born in a miraculous way, though the narratives of Matthew and Luke were not extant. It was in this belief that John could speak of Him as “the Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, and *was made flesh.*”* It was in this belief, too, that Paul could point to him, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied *himself*, and *took upon Him the form of a servant*, and *was made in the likeness of man.*” Such descriptions of the person of our Saviour, indeed, would be sheer absurdities, if He were not born in the way in which His birth is related by Matthew and Luke. They inform us of the great truth surpassing all understanding, that, in His infinite love towards us, His creatures, and by commiseration with us, our Creator himself has descended from His heavenly throne to come to the rescue,—He, “by

* John i. 1, 14.

† Phil. ii. 6, 7.

whom all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible who is before all things, and by whom all things consist ;” * He, “ who is the great Jehovah, the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega,” † and “ besides whom there is no God.” ‡

Nor can we wonder that Jesus, knowing himself to be that Highest of all beings, appeared amongst us with an authority such as would have been reckoned only the manifestation of insanity if assumed by a person of less than divine character, and that He allowed himself to use expressions such as would have been blasphemous if found upon the lips of any common man. Rightly the scribes asked, “ Who can forgive sins but God only ? ” Yet Jesus said to sinners, “ Your sins be forgiven you ! ” A man who is by nature gifted with great powers may, at moments when he deems it expedient for himself to glory, say a great deal without saying too much ; but he must be either a blasphemer, or—God, who

* Col. i. 16, 17. † Rev. i. 8. ‡ Isa. xliv. 6.

has the boldness to say, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life! No man cometh unto the Father but by me! I am the Light of the world! I give my sheep eternal life! Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him,” &c. A man who to his last breath continued to speak in that way, if he is not God, must be an abomination in the sight of God as well as of men, and fully deserves to be put to the cruelest of deaths. But then, nothing would be more absurd than to expect such a man to rise again from the grave in glory. Yet *that*, and *nothing short of that*, has taken place. In the sight of men His whole life was one continuous blasphemy, and, as a blasphemer, they killed Him. But God hath raised Him up again, and hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name! What, then, is left, but that at the name of that supposed “blas-

phemer," every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that He is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father !

It is needful to place the divine nature of Jesus in the clearest possible light, because in the present day science, animated by the spirit of infidelity, tries with renewed force to rob the Church of her dearest treasure, her belief that her Saviour is her God. This attack of science is the more serious, because amongst those who lead the attack are men as much distinguished by the integrity of their moral character as they are eminent by their learning and talents. Starting from the proposition that an ingress of the supernatural into the sphere of nature is impossible, such science denies everything miraculous in the life of Jesus, and thus tries to lower Him to the level of a common man, subject to like passions as ourselves. Against this unbelief we ought to lift up high the banner of the faith of the Church, which believes that the Man Jesus, who eighteen centuries ago publicly declared himself to be the Son of God, has proved the truth

of that declaration by His resurrection from the dead. Scientific men have at all times denied that resurrection ; but they have never been able to prove that it was not an historical fact. The Church is right in placing greater confidence in Him who, after having died, rose again from the dead, than in a thousand others, however respectable and learned, who died but never came back. Nor should we allow ourselves to be confounded by the fact that so many of those who deny the faith of the Church excel by their moral principles, their honest conduct, and amiable character. This only shows that there may be an admirable development of the sense of the human with but little of the sense of the divine. Where such a one-sided development takes place in a man's heart, it is quite consistent that he should disbelieve everything divine in the life of Jesus, because he neither understands nor desires to understand it. To him the divine, even when manifesting itself with indubitable historical evidences, must look suspicious, illusive, fabulous, because there is nothing in his

heart that tells him what to do with it. It is a mere perplexity to him, just as a man in whom the sense of music is undeveloped is puzzled when he finds himself in a musical company, and does not understand what *can* be the meaning or the use of all that sound which bursts forth from a collection of wooden and brass instruments. For every phenomenon that lies without, an organ within is required to enable us to perceive and to understand it. As there is no light to a man who has no eyesight, nor a sound to a man who has no hearing ; so there is nothing divine to a man who has no inward sense of the divine.

The life and resurrection of Jesus are historical facts, which proclaim the great truth that God has come down amongst us to re-unite us to himself. And we believe that proclamation with joy and adoration.

Why?

Because it brings us exactly what we feel we are, above all things, in need of. We feel that we are separated from God ; that we have dishonoured and insulted Him, and that, con-

sequently, we are lost, miserable, in fear of death, in a condition the most hopeless. We feel that only re-union with God can save us; we feel that *we* cannot possibly bring that about; that if it can be brought about at all God must come down to us, since we cannot go up to Him. But *who* of us can bring God down from heaven? We feel utterly helpless. We can only cry, “O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!”

Well, all at once Jesus appears amongst us. He cries, “Come unto me! I will give you rest! I am the Life! I am the Resurrection! I am the Son of God! I am He that atones for your sins, that conquers death, that raises the dead again!” He strews His path with signs of His divine mission; He sheds His atoning blood; He visits death in His own mansion; He rises up again like a conquering hero in the glory of resurrection!

Merely intellectual science may, in the presence of these facts, sit down coolly to discuss the question about the possibility of the supernatural. In wonder and delight *we* stretch

out our arms towards that Wonderful One,
crying, "Hosannah in the highest!" And
if we should hold our peace, we should expect
the very stones to cry out.

SING a hymn to Jesus when the heart is faint,
Tell it all to Jesus, comfort or complaint;
If the work is sorrow, if the way is long,
If thou dread'st the morrow, tell it Him in
song;
Though the heart be aching for the crown and
palm,
Keep thy spirit waking with a faithful psalm.

Jesus, we are lowly, Thou art very high,
We are all unholy, Thou art purity;
We art frail and fleeting, Thou art still the
same,
All life's joys are meeting in Thy blessed
name.
Sing a hymn to Jesus when the heart is faint,
Tell it all to Jesus, comfort or complaint.

All His words are music, though they make me
weep,

Infinitely tender, infinitely deep,
Time can never render all in Him I see,
Infinitely tender, human Deity.

Sing a hymn to Jesus when thy heart is faint,
Tell it all to Jesus, comfort or complaint.

Jesus, let me love Thee, infinitely sweet;
What are the poor odours I bring to Thy feet?
Yet I love Thee, love Thee, come into my
heart,

And ere long remove me to be where Thou
art.

Thus I sing to Jesus when my heart is faint,
So I tell to Jesus, comfort or complaint.

P. H.

V.

A Saviour of Men.

HEART of Christ, O cup most golden,
Brimming with salvation's wine,
Million souls have been beholden
Unto Thee for life divine ;
Thou art full of blood the purest,
Love the tenderest and surest ;
Blood is life, and life is love.
O, what wine is there like love ?

Heart of Christ, O cup most golden,
Out of Thee the martyrs drank,
Who for truth in cities olden
Spake, nor from the torture shrank.
Saved they were from traitor's meanness,
Filled with joys of holy keenness :
Strong are those that drink of love ;
O, what wine is there like love ?

Heart of Christ, O cup most golden,
The remotest place and time
Thou for labours wilt embolden,
Unpresuming but sublime :
Hearts are firm, though nerves be shaken ;
When from Thee new life is taken,
Truth recruits itself by love ;
O, what wine is there like love ?

Heart of Christ, O cup most golden,
Taking of thy cordial blest,
Soon the sorrowful are folden
In a gentle, healthful rest :
Thou anxieties art easing,
Pains implacable appeasing,—
Grief is comforted by love.
O, what wine is there like love ?

Heart of Christ, O cup most golden,
Liberty from Thee we win ;
We who drink no more are holden
By the shameful cords of sin ;
Pledge of Mercy's sure forgiving,
Powers for a holy living,—
These, thou cup of love, are thine ;
Love, thou art the mightiest wine !

L.

"The man Christ Jesus."

ALREADY, on the very day of our fall, we were told by an all-merciful God, that we were to be saved by one of our own kindred. "He who was to bruise the serpent's head, was to be the woman's seed." Since then, those of our race who felt in need of salvation and believed in God's promise, have been looking out for "a child that should be born unto them;" for a "Son that should be given unto them." From time to time the Spirit of God showed them, leaf after leaf, of the future biography of that expected Saviour. Jacob, when with dying lips he whispered, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord," pointed at Judah as the root from which the "Shiloh" was to spring up.* David fell

* Gen. xlix. 10.

asleep in the expectation that “of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, God would raise up Christ the Saviour.* Isaiah saw Him in the Spirit, as “a man of sorrows,” who was “to bear the sins of many;” who was “to be cut off out of the land of the living;” but also “to see the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied and to justify many.† Daniel beheld Him as “one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven,” to whom dominion and glory was given.‡ In all ages the holy men of God have been as much assured that their Saviour was to be a man, as they were convinced that none but God was their Saviour.

- As there have at all times been some among the “wise and the prudent” who asked why our Saviour should be God, so there have been some among them who asked why our Saviour should be a man. These deemed it unworthy of God to humiliate himself so as to become a human being. They consequently denied that Jesus was really a man; they held that He was only a man in appearance, and not in reality.

* Acts ii. 30.

† Isa. liii.

‡ Dan. vii. 13.

There is scarcely an error imaginable against which the Holy Spirit protests more strongly than against this. It is the falsehood which characterizes the spirit of antichrist, “who confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”* Of our Lord’s life it makes a mere optical delusion; it degrades the person of our Lord to a mere phantasm. Truly, he must be an enemy, both of Christ and of man, who can hold such an opinion; for if Jesus was only a man in appearance, then it is only in appearance that we are saved, and the gospel, instead of being the joyful word of truth, is at best a cruel deception.

Nor is there a truth which God’s Spirit places in a clearer light than that of the real manhood of Jesus. He plainly and straightforwardly tells us, “that the Word was made flesh.”† He assures us that, “as we are partakers of flesh and blood, so Christ also himself took part of the same;”‡ “that in all things He was made like unto us,” with the exception

* 1 John iv. 3.

† John i. 14.

‡ Heb. ii. 14.

of one thing, “He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

So His birth was not a birth in appearance, but He was really born of a woman, as every child is. The temptations with which He was tempted in the desert, and throughout His life, until his last breath, were not sham temptations, but real enticements to evil, which, in order to withstand, He was constant in strife and prayer. The pains which He endured in His body were not neutralised by any superhuman anodyne, but He felt those pains as keenly as they would have been felt by any one of us—nay, probably He felt them far more keenly, because, as all the impressions which He received were true and complete, pain must have been to Him *true* pain, in all the fulness of its nature. This may, in a natural way, account for the fact that, whereas other crucified persons of a robust constitution continued to live on the cross so long as two or three days, His system broke down within six hours. Truly, there was no acting of a part here. He really died in the

* Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15.

experience of all the agonies that accompany the violent process of a cruel death. His soul was truly separated from the body, which, as a really lifeless corpse, was buried in the grave. The awful verdict, "Thou shalt surely die," was, in its fullest extent, executed on Him. He was obedient to His Father with "an obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." It was a real love which He manifested towards us when He "laid down His life for us."

But then His glorious resurrection, too, was a reality. That was no optical illusion which made the keepers at the grave shake and become as dead; it was not a vision of their over-excited imaginations which made the women drop down at His feet in rapture and adoration. That same Jesus, who really died on the cross, really rose from the grave, brought to life again by the Spirit. He was a man, truly a man, after His resurrection as before it. Death had not extinguished His humanity. He did not pass over into a nature of a different class, and thus cease to be one of

our race. It was not an angelic body which the women touched when they “held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.”* It was not a spirit, not a phantom, which the disciples saw, when the risen One said unto them, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”† It was a human body. It was that same body which, at Bethlehem, was born of the Virgin Mary, in which He had lived at Nazareth, walked amongst us, and slept, and eaten, and drunk, as do all human creatures. It was that same body that had died on the cross, and which carried the marks of the crucifixion across the gulf of death even into its new resurrection-life. It is true that body proved, after its resurrection, to be possessed of certain wonderful capacities, which it had never manifested before. It could appear or disappear to human vision, according to the pleasure of the Spirit who inhabited it. It could enter a room, the doors of which were closed. It could soar up

* Matt. xxviii. 9.

† Luke xxiv. 39.

heavenward, till it disappeared from human sight. But these properties, wonderful and sublime as they were, yet were not incompatible with the conception of a human body. They only showed the perfection of development of which the human body is capable, under the agency of God's Spirit. The body of our Lord remained, *with* these properties, a real *human* body. Nothing is more graphically pictured in the sacred record than the eagerness with which our risen Lord desired to impress his friends with the fact that "it was He himself" whom they saw; that it was their beloved Lord and Master, whom they knew so well, who was standing before them, who smiled upon them with the same kind eyes, who spoke to them with the same lips, as before. He urged them to handle and to touch Him. He bade them to give Him some meat, and He ate it before them, that they should see that He really was a human being as He was before. It was in that same human body that, on the fortieth day after His resurrection, He walked up with them to Mount Olivet. They

saw Him taken up into heaven. And Paul, speaking twenty years later of Him who sitteth on the heavenly throne, by the right hand of God, calls Him—"The **MAN** Christ Jesus."

Thus God has shown that Jesus is the Lord, the Almighty One, before whom the devil can dig no abyss of misery so deep that He should not be able to convert it into a mountain of glory, infinitely loftier in its height than was the abyss awful in its depth. For, while the arch-fiend purposed to drag man from his earthly throne down to the bottom of hell, God hath not only restored him to that earthly throne, but raised him up to the heavenly throne, far above all creatures, tribes, kindreds, families, and generations, principalities, powers, and thrones in heaven and on earth; so that all power in the universe, the domain of heaven and the keys of hell and of death, are placed in the hands of—a **MAN**. It is a **Man** "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily;*" it is a **Man** whom all angels worship; it is a **Man** who is to judge them and

* Col. ii. 9.

the world; it is a Man before whom Satan and all his angels tremble; and it is a Man at whose name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth—to the glory of God the Father.”*

So it is that God hath loved our race. The world was little aware what an exceeding eternal weight of mercy was given to us when the unknown virgin of Nazareth walked her heavy journey to Bethlehem, to “bring forth her first-born Son.” But now that we, by the grace of God, know a little of it, we bow down in adoration, and exclaim with the Psalmist, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the *Son* of man that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet.”†

This word was true with reference to our first father, Adam, “whom God created in His own image,” for he was placed as a king in the

* Phil. ii. 10.

† Psalm viii. 4.

midst of creation, and there was given unto him “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”* But by his fatal disobedience he lost the glory of the image of God, and his royal dominion went with it. Instead of being the king of the earth, he became a slave of the king of hell, a leper among the creatures of God, and a child of death. Thus it was that the very existence of our race was at stake; it was about to become extinct, as a living tribe, in God’s creation. The angel of God was about to write down in the book of God’s remembrance that once there was a being called Man, created in happiness to the glory of God; but that, after a short existence, it fell from its throne into the bottomless pit of destruction, and that since then its place was found no more, leaving a sad blank in the numerous family of God. But no—praise and adoration be unto God the Father and the Lamb that is slain!—that angel’s hand was arrested, and a leaf was pro-

* Gen. i. 27, 28.

duced from the Book of the Counsels of the Most High, on which was written “Good-will toward *Men!*” The joyful report resounded through all the heavens that man should not be lost, but saved; that a new parent should be given to the fallen race, to prevent its utter extinction, to rescue it from sin and death, to make it shoot up again in the strength of an everlasting life, like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth fruit in its season, whose leaf shall wither no more! And in the fulness of time the heavenly band, in the raptures of unspeakable joy, alighted on the fields of Ephratha, to glorify the wonderful Babe, in whom was manifested God’s “good-will toward men!” There He was lying at a woman’s breast; He, from whom the human race was to spring up again, with a life as much more glorious than the one it possessed before, as heaven is more glorious than earth. Dead was our race in trespasses and sins—dead in its “first Adam.” But he was the “second Adam,”* springing up like a living “root

* 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

from a dry ground," like a succulent "branch from a withered stem," able to pour fresh eternal life into our dead veins, and to perpetuate our race, with which He had united himself, unto all eternity. He, in his infinite love, entered our family, according to the laws of God laid down in nature, that He should be truly one of us, a genuine member of our tribe, a real branch of our stem. Thus, as we were partakers of flesh and blood, so He also himself took part of the same, bringing with Him that divine, everlasting nature, which was to bear us up from the bottom of the pit, and to carry us through the gates of death and place us safe on the other side of the horrible gulf, there to make us stand before God and all His angels, without spot or wrinkle, as the images of God, reflecting His likeness in the all-surpassing glory of a God-born humanity. Thus completely identifying himself with us, He was found "in the likeness of sinful flesh,"* having taken upon himself the nature of that race on which the curse of the law and the

* Rom. viii. 3.

sentence of death rested, He freely placed himself under that curse and sentence. Loaded with that awful weight, He, going before us as our chief captain and representative, hath led the way through the dark gangways of death and the grave, being made a curse for us, though He was righteous,* being made sin for us, though He was no sinner,† and having died unto sin,‡ giving to the law its full due, He broke asunder the chains of our captivity, and rose victoriously out of the deep, as the First-born of the dead, as the first who set foot on the shore of the new world, to be followed by all his brethren, who, being regenerated through Him, are of His Spirit, His flesh and bones,§ and, as they lived and died with Him, so also must rise with Him, to take possession of the inheritance gained by His blood !

Thus it is that through the great love of God wherewith He hath loved us, we have obtained a Mediator between Him and us, who, as He is really one with God by His divine

* Gal. iii. 13.

† 2 Cor. v. 21.

‡ Rom. vi. 10.

§ Eph. v. 30.

nature, so also is one with us through His human nature. He is the wonderful link that connects our race with God, there being no other link between us, as it is written, “Ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”* Nor is there any other tribe or generation in the universe which can point at a similar union with God. Between God and the highest angel there is an immeasurable distance; between God and man there is no longer any. In the Triune Godhead there is one person who, while He is God, is man also.

Oh mystery of godliness! Oh depth of the riches of grace! We sink down in the dust and adore!

Viewing the “Man Christ Jesus” in this light, it is clear that, indispensable as His incarnation was for our salvation, His resurrection was essential to it. His being born of a woman would have been fruitless, without His birth from the grave. By the former He took part of our manhood, by the latter He carried that manhood across the gulf of death over into the

* 1 Cor. iii. 23.

land of everlasting life. By the former He took power to die for us on earth ; by the latter He took power to live for us as our Mediator in heaven. Without His resurrection our salvation would have been out of the question, not only because that resurrection was an evidence of the truth and trustworthiness of all that He had spoken and done whilst on earth, but also and paramountly because that resurrection was the very salvation itself of our human nature from the destruction into which it had fallen through sin. We cannot be human beings without being possessed of human bodies. That which constitutes our essence as God's offspring,* is our *spirit*; but that which constitutes our essence as men, is our *body*. "God formed *man* out of the dust of the ground."† By death we cease to be men, because we cease to have a human body. We may be spirits, ghosts, phantoms, but we have ceased to be men. Now, if it was the object of God's love in Christ to save *men*, it was necessary not only that our spirits should be purified and renewed,

* Acts xvii. 28.

† Gen. ii. 7.

but also that our bodies should be restored to us. From very strong expressions in the gospel it appears that, without this restoration of our bodies, our salvation would have been incomplete. A human spirit which lacks its body is not what it ought to be ; it is not just ; it has a fault ; it is naked ;* it cannot appear before God. To be perfectly faultless it must have its body ; for it was with a body that God clothed it when He created man. Therefore Scripture saith that Christ, who was delivered for our offences, *was raised again for our justification.*† He hath through His resurrection recovered for us that spotless garment, without which no human spirit can enter the heavenly court of the great and glorious King. Without His resurrection we should still “be in our sins, and all who are fallen asleep in Christ would be lost,”‡ because they would be compelled to remain in the realm of death. But, thanks be unto God, the fact that the Man Christ Jesus is at this moment sitting on the heavenly throne in the presence of God, has, for once and for ever, settled the

* 2 Cor. v. 3. † Rom. iv. 25. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18.

question, whether it is possible for a human spirit, who has lost his body through sin and death, to have that awful loss restored. Jesus is a man, and He died ; but behold He liveth for evermore. His resurrection is the guarantee of ours. Through faith in Him our spirits are already cleansed, yet we are still “groaning within ourselves,” feeling that we are not yet perfectly saved. And no wonder ; for we are still carrying along with us our body of death. But we are waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* And this, we are certain, is secured through Him “who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself!” †

Behold, then, what a perfect, all-accomplished Saviour Jesus is ! He does not merely carry us as far as the *gate* of heaven, but into the very innermost chamber of the Almighty’s dwelling-place. He does not merely make us “doorkeepers in the house of God,” but chil-

* Rom. viii. 23.

† Phil. iii. 21.

dren and heirs to whom is said, “All things are yours.”* He does not merely cleanse our souls, to leave our bodies in the power of death; neither does He merely cure our bodies to leave our spirits in the power of sin. No, He saves the entire man, body and soul and spirit. His is no half work. It is perfect in all its parts, both *inward* and *outward*. It may safely be inspected, whether by such a holy Judge as God, or by such a malicious critic as the devil. Not one spot or wrinkle will be found on the great day when “we shall appear with Him.”† It will be recorded of all the angels what once was said of the people of Galilee, who witnessed His work, “They were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well.”‡

GRACIOUS Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would gracious be :
And with words that help and heal
Would Thy life in mine reveal ;

* 1 Cor. iii. 21. † 1 John iii. 2. ‡ Mark vii. 37.

And with actions bold and meek,
Would for Christ my Saviour speak.

Truthful Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would truthful be ;
And with wisdom, kind and clear,
Let Thy life in mine appear ;
And with actions brotherly
Speak my Lord's sincerity.

Tender Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would tender be ;
Shut my heart up like a flower
In temptation's darksome hour ;
Open it when shines the sun
And his love by fragrance own.

Holy Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would holy be ;
Separate from sin, I would
Choose and cherish all things good ;
And whatever I can be
Give to Him who gave to me.



VI.

A Crucified Saviour.

HEAD, blood-besmeared and wounded,
With grief and shame bent down !
Head, jestingly surrounded
With plaited thorns for crown !
Head, in whose light reflected
The angels erst did shine,
Despised now and rejected,
All hail ! Redeemer mine !

The burden, Lord, that lieth
On Thy meek head is mine ;
The ransom-price that buyeth
The captive back is Thine.
Oh, hither, Mediator,
In mercy turn Thy face !
On me, Sin-expiator,
Shed glances of Thy grace !

Despise me not : beside Thee
My watch-stance here I'll take,
To look what may betide Thee,
E'en till Thy heart shall break.
And when Thy head is bending
Beneath death's last alarms,
A fond embrace extending,
I'll fold Thee in my arms.

With grateful heart and glowing
I thank Thee, Friend divine,
For love to sinners flowing
From these death-pangs of Thine.
Oh, make me constant ever,
While here, to Thine and Thee ;
And when I cross the river,
Prepare a place for me !

When Death approaching calls me,
Near, near me, Lord, abide ;
And when the grave appals me,
Stand, Saviour, by my side.
When soul and body languish,
And in the parting pine,
May Thy vicarious anguish
Take out the sting of mine.

W. A.

"Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

THUS, then, the truth is shown, as I said at the opening of this little work, that Jesus has come to bring us joy. For it is a matter of joy "unspeakable and full of glory" for a man lying under the verdict of death, and seeing nothing before him but destruction and corruption, to behold the dark dismal night that covers his future life wholly dispelled, and to be enabled to look forward into all eternity without fear; feeling himself totally acquitted, cleansed of all impurity, delivered from all misery, rising out of the grave as a new creature, yet in his own essential identity the same individual which he was before, but by his deepest life carried up to the highest imaginable pitch of spiritual and bodily development; united with God as no other creature

in the universe is, possessed of a holiness, a love, a power, a wisdom, and a glory such as can only be the portion of beings who are partakers of the divine nature. Oh! what a prospect! If we only believed it without wavering with a faith as a grain of mustard seed, our hearts would in all the circumstances of life, though ever so trying, be like a ten-stringed instrument for ever sending forth melodies of praise, and thanks, and adoration.

Yet Christianity is by many stigmatized as a “gloomy religion.” It is complained of as being a religion of blood, and tears, and suffering. It is shunned as being a penitentiary system, which requires man to be sorrowful, anxious, and alarmed ; to mourn over his past aberrations, to think of such lugubrious things as death and the grave ; to be constantly under the melancholy impression of the fleetingness and frailty of all things present, and to be constantly in awe of future judgment. Its ensign is a blood-sprinkled cross. Its symbols are the emblems of a broken body and of shed blood. Its heroes are martyrs who were cruci-

fied or devoured by wild beasts, or burnt to ashes, or buried alive. Placing man under the continuous impression of such dismal objects, it renders him incapable of enjoying the pleasures of this world, unfits him for the occupations of this life ; poor even in the midst of all riches, anxious even in the midst of the greatest prosperity, depressed even in the sight of the most enchanting prospects. It is, in a word, a religion which takes the spirit out of a man, cramps his energy, blasts all the flowers of his life's garden, and makes him walk like a dead one amongst the living.

There is some truth in this, but much, too, which is untrue. It is true, inasmuch as it is a description of *one* side of Christianity—of that side which is turned towards the mere looker-on standing outside of it, and who consequently does not know it except from a distance, from a few superficial glances and glimpses of its outward appearance. But the description is untrue, inasmuch as it leaves unnoticed the *inside* of the house of God, where there is nothing but peace and joy, power and glory ; where

there is a Spirit dwelling whose all-changing and all-quicken^g power is so marvellous as to make even those dismal and gloomy-looking things, which scare away the uninitiated, so many sources of infinite delight and wonder, and of a strength which casts mountains into the sea and conquers the world.

It is true that the centre of Christianity is a cross upon which hangs a bleeding Saviour. It is true that this is a spectacle of pain and misery; but it should be observed, at the outset, that that which is painful and agonizing in it was not suffered by you or by me. Suppose Jesus had come to crown *you* with thorns and to hang *you* on a tree as a curse in the sight of God and His angels, then certainly you would have good reason to call His appearance amongst us a cause of sorrow and despair. But He did no such thing. He came to deliver up himself to that awful judgment; and for what purpose? For no other than to secure *your* deliverance from it. He caused that cross, loaded with His bleeding body, to be planted *on the top of a mountain*, in the midst of the

world, that there should be an undeniable assurance for you, and for me, and for all men—an assurance not merely in *words*, but in *fact*—that *our* blood shall not be required, that *our* bodies shall not be bruised, because *His* blood was shed and *His* body was bruised for ours. Tell me, is a blood that speaketh such things a messenger of sorrow and pain? Is it possible to imagine an object richer in joy and consolation to a sinner sentenced to death and threatened with everlasting pains, than the Lamb that *hath* borne his sins, that *hath* died his death, that *hath* received the stripes which ought to have come down upon him.

But “Ah!” you say, “is it not a gloomy thing to have to learn that we ought to be hung, to be cursed, tortured, executed like malefactors? Is it not a melancholy religion that comes to tell us such things?”

Well, it *is* humiliating and grievous, but do not taunt Jesus on account of it. It is all *our* fault. It was not *He* who brought about that dismal state of things. It had been established long before He came. Truly, He did not come

to call it into existence, but to remove it out of the way. But of course He could not do the work that was required for its removal without telling us what it was being done for. Suppose you are imprisoned on account of an enormous debt, and a friend sacrifices all his property to deliver you from your confinement; and suppose that friend comes to you to show you the quittance signed by your creditor; would you call that friend a gloomy messenger because he reminds you of your bankruptcy? If you did, surely you ought to exchange the prison for a lunatic asylum.

It is quite natural that man should not wish to be reminded of his sins, so long as he does not know how to obtain deliverance from them. This is the reason why the law worketh wrath. By it is the knowledge of sin, but not of salvation. Such a reminding of sin is like cutting a man without curing him. No man who has a wound in his body can brook a person who constantly puts his finger into it merely for the purpose of making him painfully feel that *he has a wound*. But if an able surgeon comes

to thrust his scalpel into that wound, and, though the operation may be ten times more painful than the touch of the other man's finger, he is welcomed as a cause of joy, because the pain brings the cure. A story is told of a nobleman who, through his extravagant and shameful conduct, had brought himself to the necessity of leaving his country, that he might escape the hands of his creditors. In the place of his exile he was fortunate enough to find the means to keep up a respectable position. As he was a man of good parts, and of a liberal disposition, his house was frequented by many friends, but every one who was likely to make any allusions to his country, his family, or anything that reminded him of his shame, was carefully kept from his presence. "What is the use of those people's talk?" he would say to a confidential friend. "It only gives me pain, and brings no solace." One day a stranger, who came direct from the nobleman's country, presented his card at the door. On noticing the name of the stranger's residence, the servant refused to take the card

up, saying that his master could not see him. As, however, the visitor strongly insisted upon being announced, the man at length yielded, and took the card to his master, who was alone with a friend. No sooner had the master looked at it, than he joyfully ordered his servant to show the stranger up. "But is not that man your chief creditor?" asked his friend, in amazement. "If any one is likely to remind you of the past, surely *he* is."—"You are right," was the answer. But I know that he comes for no other purpose than to speak to me about my debts. I got a letter from him the other day telling me that he meant to call, to settle with me in an amicable way, so as to enable me to return to my country."

A crucified Saviour tells us painful truths, but He does not tell them to us as the law does. By Him, too, is the knowledge of sin, but He imparts to us this knowledge simply that we should all the better know the certainty and the greatness of our salvation. He does not approach the brink of the pit in which we are lying merely to heap reproaches on us,

and to leave us hopeless in the deep. He descends to the bottom, and entreats us to lay hold upon Him, that He may carry us up to the surface. But in descending He cannot help showing us the depth of misery and shame into which we have sunk. He *must* do it. And the more so when, owing to the soporific influences of the spirit of self-deception, the bankrupt has forgotten the immense amount of his debts, or the convict the enormous nature of his crimes.

But perhaps you say : "The figures are not correct. Our condition is not so bad as to justify a comparison with a state of bankruptcy or with the hopeless misery of a culprit under the sentence of death. It is true we have our faults and defects, but God is too kind and too much a God of love to condemn them as capital crimes and to punish them with death."

Ah, well, if that is your estimate of sin, then of course Jesus *must* appear to you a morose and gloomy messenger, and His painful death a quite unnecessary martyrdom. His crucifixion *cannot* be to you a cause of grateful joy ; it *must* be a stumbling-stone and a rock of

offence. It stands to reason that a religion which so decidedly declares that salvation cannot be obtained except by faith in Him who died as a curse between two thieves, must be a scandal and foolishness to those who look upon themselves as good and innocent people in the sight of God. Nor is it to be wondered at that such people, if for some reason or other they desire to be numbered among the followers of Jesus, try to show that He suffered and died for every noble purpose that may be imagined, *except* the one which God in His word assigns to His self-sacrifice—to atone for *their* sins and to die for *their* transgressions. Nay, the whole person and character of Jesus must appear to them in a light altogether different from that in which the gospel places Him. They may praise Him as a noble man, or revere Him as a prophet, but they cannot possibly adore Him as the Son of God.

A parable is told of an Egyptian prince, who through his dissolute conduct had brought leprosy upon himself. Now leprosy was counted as an exceedingly disgraceful disease by his fellow-

citizens, so that he did everything in his power to keep his condition concealed. Still so much of the secret leaked out, that it was generally known that he was not quite in good health. The disease, too, was difficult of cure. In fact, there was only one man known who was able to cure it, but he lived far away in Bagdad, where he was the Kalif's private physician. The prince's secretary sent messengers with rich presents to this physician, who returned with them to the residence of the patient. When it was known that this man had come all the way from such a remote place, and that he was the first physician of the greatest monarch in the world, people came to the conclusion that the prince must be subject to some very serious complaint, and that the complaint could be nothing short of leprosy. The leprosy being cured, and the physician having returned to his country, the prince left nothing untried to stop the report that was current about his disease. But when one day his eldest son asked him whether what was generally said and believed was true, he denied it most emphatically, assuring his

son, with an oath, that he had only been suffering from a slight attack of fever. His son thereupon asked him, why he had caused the greatest physician in the world to travel all the way from Bagdad to prescribe for him. But he stubbornly denied that the man who had cured him was that great and famous physician. He assured his son that the person who had visited him was only one of the common surgeons of the neighbourhood, since he had not even deemed it worth the trouble to send for one of the king's medical men. When this conversation of the prince with his son was reported to the physician in Bagdad, he was greatly offended. "That worthless man," he said, "has shamelessly sacrificed my reputation to his pride. But of course, since he was bent upon having his disease regarded as not disreputable, nothing was left to him but to lower my character to the level of common quacks and impostors."

The denial of the sin-atoning character of our Lord's sufferings on the cross is always the effect of pride in the heart. That pride is by

nature common to all of us, even to those who, in other respects, excel by their humility. It is prone to strike its deepest roots into the heart of men who, owing to the influence of a moral education, and to a felicitous development of the æsthetic sense, not only have kept aloof from gross irregularities in their life, but also by the integrity of their moral character and the amiability of their conversation have risen to high place in the esteem of their fellow-men. The constant respect that is paid to them, the distance that separates them from such members of society as have sunk to the lowest degree of immorality, and the impression which their own noble feelings and virtuous principles produced upon their mind, have a strong tendency towards exercising an illusory influence upon their self-estimation. They think there is so much good dwelling in themselves, and they are so little conscious of any really bad motive harbouring in their bosom, that they can hardly believe that they are such sinners in the sight of God as have deserved to be hung on a cross and be

destroyed by a painful and everlasting death. Hence it is that the greatest opposition to the cross of Christ is often found on the part of men who are distinguished for the probity of their conduct, their beneficence, and their usefulness. But their self-esteem is certainly an absurdity in the sight of God, who searcheth the heart and tries the reins, and is of purer eyes than to behold evil. To Him, that high estimation of self cannot be anything short of abominable conceit supported by deception, because man, dazzled by the splendour of his presumed virtues, neglects to pay due attention to evil symptoms, which, though apparently little, unmistakably show that, notwithstanding all the soundness of his appearance, a loathsome disease dwells in his heart. It is well known that to the perfect judge it is exactly those so-called little defects which are most repugnant. Mozart once removed a singer from a chorus who sang certain tones one-sixteenth of a tone too low. The man had a fine voice, and was remarkably skilled in singing at sight. There were also many tones which he sang correctly.

Yet the great master could not endure him. "If he sang half a tone or four tones too low," he said, "I should allow him to remain. He might be brought round. But when a man who in other respects sings so well, and who has acquainted himself so closely with the principles and rules of music, is able to sing a tone one-sixteenth below pitch, without shuddering —that man's case is hopeless." Still that man thought he was the best singer in the band, and called the eminent composer an ignorant and prejudiced man. It is also well known that a manager of a bank will never put his signature to the book-keeper's account if the balance is wrong even to the extent of a pound; not indeed altogether for the pound's sake, but because it invalidates the whole account.

God is a perfect judge. He is a Holy God. We may be of opinion that our sins are only slight "slips" which may be easily connived at; but we are mistaken if we suppose that our opinion is God's. Without entering into much discussion with us about this matter, He simply places the cross of Christ before us, and says,

"This tells you how *I* look upon sin. This tells you what a sinner has to expect if I am to deal with him according to what *I* think of him."

Let us not argue with God, for it is a hard thing to gird up our loins like a man against Him, and to answer when He demands of us. Once an amiable young man of high standing in society said, laying his hand upon his heart, to Jesus: "All these things have I observed from my youth." Yet none of these things could make him inherit eternal life. He was lost in spite of all of them. There was but one means for him to escape from eternal death—"to take up the cross and to follow Him who was to be crucified."*

The antagonists of gospel truth have often reviled the word of the cross as a "blood-theology," which represents God as a "blood-thirsty tyrant." Nothing can be more unjust and slanderous than this ignominious assertion. It would have some appearance of truth if Christ had come into this world to shed *our*

* Matt. xix. 20.

blood. But how such a criticism can be passed by intelligent men upon a doctrine which teaches that Christ came to shed His own blood lest ours should be shed, it is impossible to understand. Certainly if Jesus were only a common man, and if the gospel taught us that God had caused that "amiable and innocent Nazarene" to be executed in the room of the guilty, it would be impossible to see how such a substitution could be brought to harmonize with what Scripture teaches us of the justice of Him from whom it is far to slay the righteous *with* the wicked,* and farther still to slay the righteous and to let the wicked go unpunished. But is there any injustice in a Shepherd's laying down his life to save His sheep? Or is there any injustice done when the Creator comes down amongst His lost creatures, assumes their flesh and blood, and allows that blood to flow for their redemption? If we build a monument upon the grave of a king, who, at the head of his army, sacrificed his life as the saviour of his country, shall we blame the King

* Gen. xviii. 25.

of kings because He gave his life for the salvation of a world which He has made and loves as the work of His own hands? It is true, objection has been made, that, according to the teaching of Christendom, God appears as a cruel monarch, who cannot be prevailed upon to pardon the transgressors unless blood be shed, as it is written, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.”* And certainly that demand for blood would be cruelty, if it proceeded from a pleasure in seeing blood shed, and from a delight in witnessing the tortures of condemned wretches. But the very opposite of this is manifested by the crucifixion of God’s Son. Could He with any possibility give a stronger evidence that He had *no* pleasure in our pains, and *no* delight in our death, than He gave when He took our pains and death upon himself? Or have we to suppose what some slanderously say the Church teaches, viz., that the Son of God shed His blood to satisfy the revengefulness of His Father? As if with the Father there were nothing but wrath and justice, with

* Heb. ix. 22.

the Son, on the contrary, nothing but love and mercy ! Truly, if there is one misrepresentation of the mutual relationship of the Father and the Son, which Scripture abhors, it is this. It tells us that the Father so *lored* the world, that *He* gave his Son. It speaks of the Son as the costliest treasure of God's loving heart, which He, however, from commiseration for us, spared not.* It was the Father, the Son, and the Spirit who united in the resolution of grace that the Son, one of them, should go down to the rescue of our race, and thus manifest both the justice and the love of the Triune God. He was to shed His precious blood, because the shedding of blood was demanded, not by the Father merely, but by the Father *and* the Son *and* the Spirit alike. It was demanded by them, not because there is a cruel, bloodthirsty spirit in them—for who is thirsty after his *own* blood?—but because, according to the eternal principles of justice, it was impossible that a race of flesh and blood that had fallen into sin, could be saved without

* Rom. viii. 32.

its blood being shed. It was impossible—if there are things that are impossible even to a Almighty God. The very fact that God resolved to offer that beloved Son places it beyond doubt, that it *must* have been impossible to save man without the shedding of blood; for even a human father will not allow his son to risk his life, if he sees a chance of reaching his object in another way. There was no alternative left, save either our eternal death, or the temporal death of God's only Son. And God chose the latter!

What, then, is man, that in the sight of such a self-denying love, he can speak of cruel tyranny, bloodthirstiness?—he who, since the days of Cain, allowed no day to pass on which he did not brandish his sword, reeking with his brother's blood, on which he did not boastfully cry, “I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt!” Both God and we have united in shedding the blood of Christ, but if there was bloodthirsty cruelty in the act—and assuredly there was!—on *which* side did it lie?

O God, my God, who once on earth
Didst dwell in human frame,
And thus uncover hidden truths,
Truths evermore the same ;

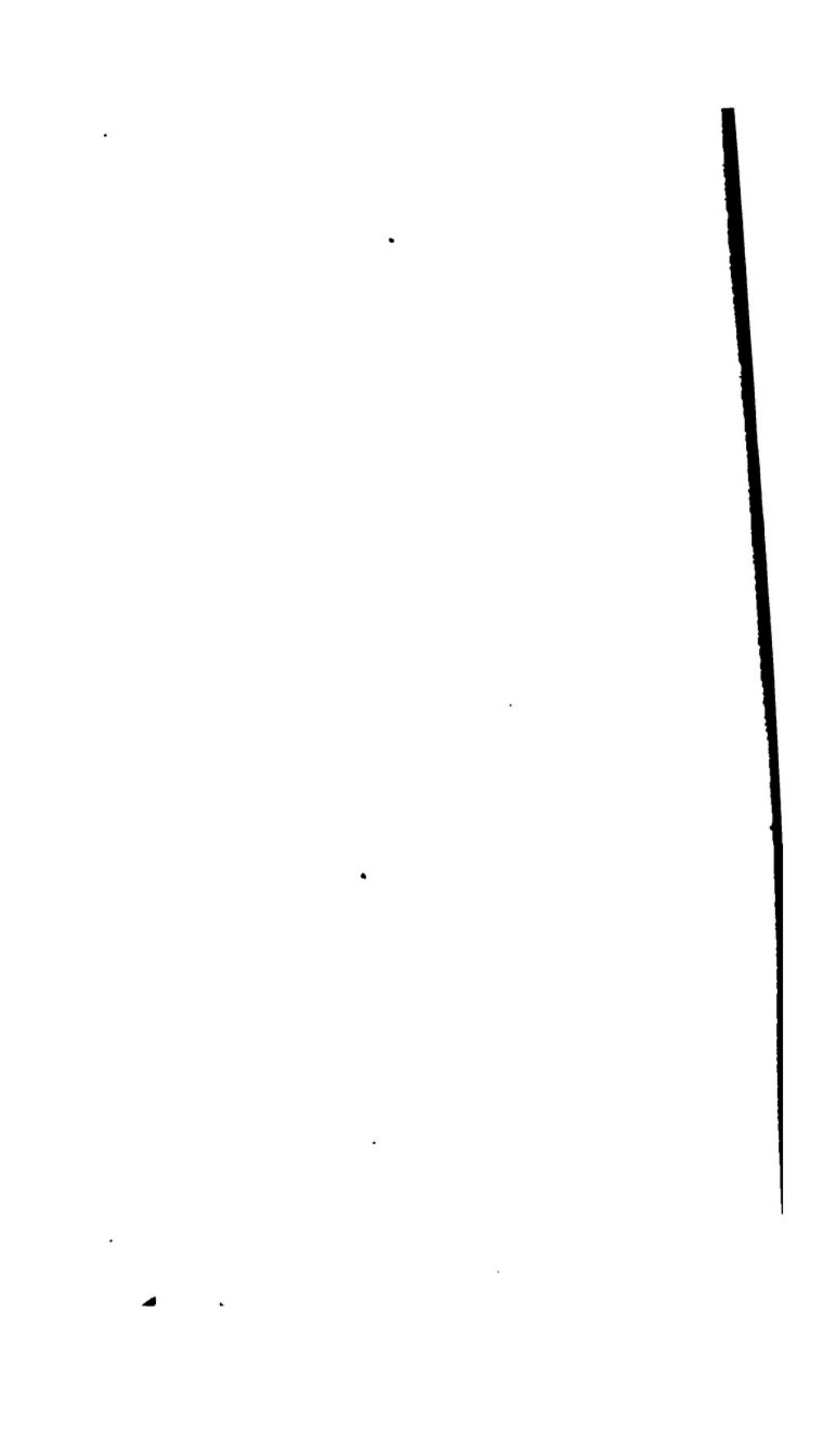
Thine heart is an unchanging heart,
'Tis full of tender love ;
A love that does not seek its own,
Though glorified above.

We saw Thee here o'er sinners weep,
We heard the sigh Thou heaved ;
Thy body is not wounded now,
But still Thy Spirit's grieved.

Thy Spirit is around me, Lord,
In Thee I live and move ;
Thou feelest now the wound of sin,
For Thou dost sinners love.

O may I never grieve my Lord,
My Lord who loves so well ;
May fear of grieving Thee be more
Than fear of flaming hell.

B. W.



VII.

‘Ecce Homo.’

BEHOLD the Man ! O what a tragic doom
Was that which smote the King Divine of Love !
O what a recompense of pangs and gloom
To Him who came with treasures from above !

Behold the Man ! For foulest human crime
The sharp thorns pitiless torment His brow :
Yet is His glance sweet, calm, serene, sublime,
As if the rose, the laurel, decked Him now.

Behold the Man ! How high and beautiful
Are His desire and thought ! In good alone
Is His reward ; for God's most righteous rule,
For our true bliss, is the Redeemer's moan.

Up to the peaks of everlasting light,
Up to himself, dear Jesus would us raise !
The cross's awful path for Christ is bright,
For round His steps Redemption's triumphs blaze.

Behold the Man ! O learn from Christ, my soul,
To yearn with grander than an earthly aim,
To seek through trials grim, Truth's godlike goal,
To battle valiant in the Saviour's name.

In Jesus trust, believe ; Him follow bold ;
To heaven, patient, hopeful, earnest, gaze :
On Sorrow's thorns shall blossom flowers untold ;
The night shall herald Joy's eternal days !

JOHN xix. 5.

"Behold the Man!"

SAD as is the aspect of a crucified Saviour, yet it is a cause of joy to those who believe in Him. For it *is* a great blessing to be undeceived, when walking on the way to destruction under the belief that it is a way of happiness. The disclosure may be painful at the first moment, inasmuch as it causes all the castles which we have built in the air to shrink in pieces, but soon we thank the faithful friend, who, by his timely instruction, prevented our ruin, and put us on the right path.

We are born of Adam, and we grow up in the strength and spirit of Adam; and when we have reached the age of discrimination, we look with wonder and delight at the life of the world round about us. It is the life of the Adamic race of which we are members. It

has its own treasures and pleasures, its beauties and comforts, and we think that *here* is heaven. To live this life is to live indeed ! To be man, and to strive after all that man can realise, is true happiness ! So we throw ourselves body and soul into the stream of that life, which, we have no doubt, will carry us on; pure and undisturbed, to the golden coasts of the land of joy.

But one day—as it may happen to many a one of us—some invisible hand touches our shoulder; our eyes are directed on the cross of Christ, and a voice whispers: *Ecce homo! That is man!*

We start back. We see a man crowned with thorns, nailed on a tree, covered with blood, broken down in the agonies of death. “He hath no form nor comeliness. There is no beauty that we should desire Him.”

“Such is man in the sight of God,” the gospel whispers: “and such shame and destruction will be the lot of every man, if he is possessed of nothing more than he got from Adam.”

Such language highly offends us. It almost

sounds like blasphemy to our ears. For how much, we think, is there dwelling in man, and issuing from man, that is entitled to reward, to praise and admiration ! Look at the heroes of our race, who, in all ages, and among various peoples, have astounded the world by their moral grandeur and their valiant exploits, or by their genius in art and science. Look at man's progress in civilisation, in the practice of the social virtues, in the development of religious feeling, and of the sense of the good, the noble, the beautiful. Is all that to be rewarded by a cross, and to finish in shame and destruction ?

I am far from denying that all this is useful, admirable, and praiseworthy according to the standard of our human judgment. But I must draw attention to the fact, that neither what we call moral perfection, nor heroism, nor development in art and science, are adequate to accomplish two things, which are absolutely necessary to render man capable of standing before God. These two things are, the taking away of sin, and the quickening of the dead.

In other words, they cannot restore man as a clean spirit in a pure immortal body. There is no power in the Adamic life, though carried to its highest possible development here below, which can bring about that change. Man can sin, but he cannot blot out transgression. Man can kill, but he cannot make alive. With all his so-called moral excellence he is and remains a sinner. With all his so-called mastership over matter, he is and remains a child of death. These are the sad but undeniable truths which the thorn-crowned man on the cross proclaimed to all the world. "Be not deceived"—thus it sounds from the top of Calvary—"Be not deceived by the grace of the fashion of this world, for whatever man by his genius and skill may improve, correct, or beautify, sin and death continue unchanged. In the eyes of the world man may appear like an angel, even like a god. But if you desire to know what he is in the eyes of God, look at the cross.

This seems disheartening language. "Is there then no value in the purely human?" we

would ask. "Are human virtues, moral improvements, progress in civilisation, in art, and in science, utterly worthless? Have we to look upon these things as 'shining sins?' Have we to leave them alone, to abstain from them as charming but poisonous fruits?"

No, we have not. For as little as the cultivation of the purely human can take away sin and quicken the dead, so little can its neglect. Suppose a man who was suffering from a fatal disease took to painting, under the supposition that it would contribute to his cure, would you not be correct in telling him that this practice, beautiful as it was in other respects, was utterly unavailable for his purpose? But suppose that this invalid at once gave up the further pursuit of that art, expecting that *that* would help him. Would you confirm him in that expectation.

There have at all times been men who thought that to renounce the human was to secure salvation. They withdrew from human society. They took up their abodes in deserts, or im-mured themselves in monasteries and convents.

They lived on the tops of pillars, or within the narrow limit of a barrel. They gave away all their property and reduced themselves to paupers. They burnt whole libraries which contained the costliest treasures of literature; and some of them being excellent musicians, they destroyed their instruments. Some, again, being eminent artists, destroyed the productions of their own skill. They did all this on the supposition that the farther they withdrew from the human, the nearer they drew to God.

Nothing has brought the falseness of this theory more clearly to light than the incarnation of God's Son. If the human were absolutely incompatible with the divine, God could never have become man. In His days there was manifestation of human virtue as well as of human vice. He praised the former, and condemned the latter. He recommended the example of the good Samaritan, and warned men against the unmercifulness of the Priest and the Levite. In His days there was social civilisation, there was cultivation of art and

science, there was architecture, music, sculpture, painting, and literature. He never spoke against these things. Not one instance is recorded, from which it appears that any of these accomplishments of human culture came into collision with His work, or called forth an unfavourable remark from Him. He was in the midst of us eating and drinking the food which human skill had prepared; He was dressed in the garment which the human industry had made, and enjoyed the benefits, privileges, and comforts which civilised society of His time afforded. He went into well-built houses, crossed the sea in ships, sat down at meals with Simon the distinguished Pharisee, or with Zaccheus the rich publican. Human art, human skill, human genius, met Him at every step on His way through life. He never scouted them. He testified His approval of them by the very fact that He made use of their product. "Is not this the carpenter?" His countrymen asked, when He appeared amongst them. He probably was a skilled labourer himself, and Nazareth could perhaps show many a piece of

furniture and many a house that testified to His skill as an artisan.

Indeed all that could be said in favour of the *human* was known to Him. Nay, He had sanctioned the *human* by His very incarnation. Yet all He could say of *man* was, that he was lost ; that, with all his *human* excellencies, he was leprous in the sight of God. He did not deny that we knew how to give good gifts, but with all that He declared us to be *evil*.* The *human* may fill the world with marvels, but it cannot save. "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?" He cried. There was nothing in the world that could prevent that loss. It was from another world that the needed salvation was to come down. It came embodied in Him, who was not from below, but from above. He was in this world, but He found nothing in it that He could use for His purpose. He was a *man*, but He found nothing in the *human* that could support Him in his great work. It broke down in Him under the weight of God's curse.

* Matt. vii. 11.

It died in Him upon the cross, and had He been possessed of nothing more than the human, He would certainly have been lost with it. It is true, it rose up again on the third day, but through *His* power, not by its own. On yonder side of the grave He showed what man becomes through Him. On *this* side He showed what man becomes if left to himself—if left to the consequences of his own work. Then he becomes a bleeding corpse—a curse—an abomination in the sight of God and His angels.

That is man!

How is it that, the human in itself not being evil, man is yet lost?

Because man has connected himself with that which is *anti-human*. Sin is not human. It was not found in man as he came forth from the hand of his Maker. Sin is devilish. It gets into man from without, like a poison. It has permeated his whole being, his soul, his body, his thoughts, his appetites, and his passions. It pervades his humanity, as an obnoxious liquor may pervade wholesome food; it suffuses his moral nature, as foul air may

suffuse the atmosphere. But it never becomes human, nor does it become moral. It is *anti*-human and *anti*-moral; and the closer it is connected with the human and the moral, the more destructive does it show itself to humanity and to morality. It is a thoroughly heterogeneous element in man which cannot but de-humanise him, and must end in the total decomposition and destruction of his nature. Often its pestiferous virulence breaks through the surface—and the unhappy wretch dies on the scaffold or in the hospital. But often too it leaves the outward shell untouched, nay, through its feverish excitement, it often heightens the outward brilliancy, while it inwardly eats away all the strength and substance, and makes the soul secretly shake and tremble at the very moment when fame sounds the trumpet and admiration builds its monuments.

It is that anti-human element, that godless principle called sin, which was condemned by the crucifixion of Christ.* It was not the

* Rom. viii. 3.

human which He came to destroy, but the sin which had lodged itself *in* the human. But sin, as it was once through the power of the devil forced into the human, so through the power of God it may be forced out again. It was possible to separate it from the human, without the human being destroyed. To effect this wonderful process, the God-Man gave himself up to death. In Him the human was first connected with the divine ; and so its indestructibility was secured. Then it was made sin—loaded with the sins of the world and put into the crucible of death, into the furnace of wrath. There sin died off, but the human was kept safe. "In that He died," the Apostle says, "He died unto sin once : but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God."* And another scripture says, "He was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, *without sin*, unto salvation."† Thus He became the second Adam, the Father and root of a perfectly cleansed and sinless humanity.

* Rom. vi. 10.

† Heb. ix. 28.

Through faith in Him we become His kindred, as, through His incarnation, He became ours. This is what Scripture calls Regeneration. Through faith in Him, under the operation of the Spirit of God, we drop the sinful humanity of Adam and assume the sinless humanity of Christ. We continue *men*, but, cut off from the old corrupted root, we are transplanted, engrafted into the fresh root, the root of the pure and ever-living humanity. So, looking up through faith unto the Crucified One, we die with Him, not unto humanity, but unto sin. And, looking up to the Risen One, we live as saved and quickened men, not unto sin, but unto God. "Likewise," the Apostle says, "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."*

Dead, not unto the human, but unto the *sinful* that defiles and spoils the human. The old well-known adage, "I am a man, and I

* Rom. vi. 11, 6.

reckon nothing human alien to me"** is perfectly becoming on the lips of those who through faith draw their life from Christ. But to love the human as if it were the best, to admire the human as if it were the highest, and to rely upon the human as if it were the strongest, is impossible to us if the root upon which we live is not the "first Adam who was made a living soul," but the "last Adam, who was made a quickening Spirit." For in this the sinfulness of sin is shown, that it tries to raise man above God, to place him in the room of God, and thus uses the human as a weapon to carry on the devil's warfare against God. The true character of sin is not to employ the human as a means for a higher object—the glory of God; but to establish the human as an object in itself, nay, as *the* object of life, beyond which there is no higher, and to which all other things must be subservient, even religion itself with all its glory and majesty, as though man were not created to glorify God, but God existed for the purpose of making man

* "Homo sum; et humani nihil a me alienum puto."

happy and great. It was to expose the utter perverseness and abominableness of this system that God caused the human to break down in shame and misery on the cross, that it should be known to every creature in heaven, and earth, and hell, what becomes even of such a being as man, who was created in His own image and likeness, if he disconnects himself from God in order to connect himself with sin. At the same time He caused the human, through the resurrection of the God-Man, to rise in perfect beatitude, that it should be known that only in reunion with God is there true life and perfect happiness for every creature, even although that creature should have sunk to the bottom of the pit of destruction.

This is the great teaching of the cross of Christ. It is understood by all who "are crucified with Christ and nevertheless live." They live "in the flesh," in the human, but the life which they live in the human is not the life of sin, but the life of Christ, "who loved them and gave himself for them."* To them the

* Gal. ii. 20.

sinful-human is dead and buried. The human in which they live is the Christ-human, the humanity of the risen man of God.

The characteristic of sin is to make the means the end; to wrench the centre out of its place, and to force that which should be at the circumference into its room. There is no sin in eating and drinking, if we eat and drink for the purpose of living; but, if we live for the purpose of eating and drinking, sin manifests itself. The human, regarded in union with God, is a wonderful complex of the most admirable and sublime faculties; it is a mirror of the divine. There is nothing sinful in architecture; God himself is the most eminent builder.* There is no sin in sculpture, in painting, in music; God himself is the most accomplished artist. The whole creation is the expression of His thoughts in material forms; it is a picture, bright with the beauties of His painting; it is a concert-hall, resounding with the anthems and choruses which He hath to sing, and other harmonies. It is the man, and not

* Heb. xi. 10.

the brute, who has received talents to imitate God in these manifestations of His genius, power, and majesty, and, by exercising these talents, he displays the glory of that God who has created him with such talents. It is not so much the productions of His skill in themselves which glorify God, as the very fact of His being able to produce them. If a flower glorifies God simply by displaying the beauties of its form and colour, much more is God glorified by a creature who can cultivate a flower, or paint a flower, or carve a flower out of unshapen stone. If God is glorified by a nightingale warbling its carol in the foliage, much more is He glorified by man who is able to compose a symphony and to construct the instruments from which it bursts forth in streams of concord. To forbid a man who has received a talent for any human art to exercise it on the false supposition of its not being spiritual and divine, is to suppress a lovely feature in the likeness of God, and to rob God of the glory which would have accrued to Him from its true development. Nor should we suppose that we can make the

an spiritual and divine by tying it to religious in the same way as we put a horse to a carriage. A man may glorify God by painting a tree, and he may honour the devil by painting an *Ecce Homo*. A man glorifies God by playing a sonata of heaven, and he may give full scope to the spirit of sin by the singing of a psalm. The spirit is not in the thing, but in the spirit produces it, that makes the thing itself the final object of its life, that is bent upon nothing but to glorify and to beautify itself by the production of the thing, no matter what the thing may be. Even the most divine glories may be made by sin to serve the devil's purpose, and so may the human. When the apostle enjoins us to "think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, and lovely,"* he enforces no other virtues but what lie in the sphere of the human. When man thinks of them in the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God, he uses the human as a means of expressing and manifesting the divine. When,

* Phil. iv. 8.

on the contrary, he thinks on them as only subservient to the glory of himself, he degrades the human as a manifestation of the devilish; for, strange as it may seem, yet it is a fact that even the true, the honest, the just, the pure, and the lovely, may be called forth, and used with an untrue, an unjust, an impure, and odious design.

And thus, also, that which is generally called "moral integrity" is often degraded into a means for furthering the purpose of sin. Morality is the noblest in the human. Still, sin knows how to reduce that nobly human to the level of the evil, by disconnecting it from the divine, by isolating it in a sphere of its own, wholly apart from God. It may be defined as the system of carrying on the good without God. It is worse than immorality, or, I should rather say, it is the most serious form of immorality, because it pursues the moral for an immoral purpose. It tries to establish the independence of man, and to glorify the human through the development of the moral powers, and the refinement of the moral sense.

It teaches man to be virtuous, chaste, and temperate, to be honest, and magnanimous, from self-love, from self-esteem, but not from love of God. It stimulates man by self-admiration, which necessarily ends in self-worship. It proclaims the existence of a second good principle, independently of and co-equal with God. It tries to set up a kingdom of the good next to the kingdom of God, of which man is to be the king, who, in this capacity, may deal with God as one king deals with another, claiming mutual respect and courtesy. In this system the evil appears under the name of a lesser good. The striving after purity atones for all impurity; man has to ask forgiveness of nobody save of himself, because he is the highest judge in his own empire, and has to consult no other law than that of his own conscience, there being no lawgiver beside himself. This system of developing and perfecting the human, charming as it is in the eyes of man, is the most hateful in the sight of God, because it carries the principle of an independent sovereignty (which is the diabolic principle) to the

utmost point of rivalry, and aims at making conquests at the cost of God's dominion, through the medium of weapons taken from his own arsenal. It is the strong fortress of pride, the hotbed of self-deception, the nursery of hypocrisy, and the grave of all true love, devotion, and worship.

It is humanity in connection with, and as the manifestation of, this God-attacking and man-worshipping spirit, which was condemned and publicly executed in Him who, crowned with thorns and covered with shame, was presented to the world, when were heard these awful words, *Ecce Homo!* To acknowledge the justness of that verdict with all our heart is to take the first step on the way of salvation; for, to acknowledge that man, with all his human excellencies, is hopelessly lost through sin—to acknowledge that the human, apart from Christ, even in its highest development, is earthly, carnal, devilish—is to die unto that which cannot save but destroy, and to grasp Him who alone is mighty to carry us through death even unto life. The thorn-crowned

1 tears away the veil of self-deception from eyes of humanity, and shows man what he ly is. The honest one does not struggle to djust the veil before his eyes, but looks into truth as it is now placed before him, tes his breast, and justifies God. Both the ectable man and the publican, the virtuous nan and the harlot, meet here; they take ir places side by side at the foot of the is. "All our righteousness," they cry, "is filthy rags; all our boasting is only in n who died for us; all our hope stands only n Him who rose for us again in newness of ." Thus, through faith in Him, we pass n sin into righteousness, from death into . We formerly deemed ourselves good, ole, and refined; we have now learnt to hate t selfish goodness, that proud nobility, that complacent refinement, and to love the od, the noble, and the beautiful as Jesus loves m, rejoicing in God, thanking Him, and rifying Him. We have been revealed unto selves in our true form and character as ning even in the good, as worshipping our-

selves even in the generous, as serving the devil even in the religious, as giving a savour of man even to things that are divine, as striving after the carnal even in the tasteful and sublime. Our eyes have been opened to discover that evil power of perdition which dwells in our flesh, and tries to intrude into everything we think, and desire, and speak, and do. We have learnt to take fright at it, and to hate it, and to fight against it ; so that instead of it the life and spirit of Christ may be diffused all through our being, and the human which is in us may be the manifestation of the love and power of Christ, inspiring and prompting us to everything that is good, and true, and noble, and divine, not that *we* should be glorified, but only He who, through His blood, saved us from the hopeless ruin of manhood.

Thus Jesus is the Saviour of our soul. He brings about a complete separation of our soul from sin. For this is true salvation, not only that we are delivered from the sequel of sin, but from the love of sin, of the taste for it. Until *that change* has taken place in a man's soul he is

isaved, even though he should be transported
the very heaven of heavens. The question,
how to save man? was synonymous with, how
make man hate sin, and love God better
than himself? This great problem Jesus has
solved. "Now being made free from sin, and
come servants to God," the Apostle says,
"ye have your fruit unto holiness." And
other Apostle adds, "Whom having not
seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see
him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy
speakable and full of glory : receiving the
word of your faith, even the salvation of your
souls." *

SING, my tongue, of glorious warfare,
Sing the last, the dread affray !
O'er the cross, high victory's token,
Sound the glad triumphant lay,
How the sacrifice enduring
Earth's Redeemer won the day.

* Rom. vi. 22; 1 Peter i. 8, 9.

He with our first father mourning
For his crime and broken faith,
Who of that ill fruit partaking
In a moment died the death,—
Marked e'en then a tree to ransom
All the first tree's woe and scathe.

Such the work for our salvation
In its order fixed and due ;
Art, the traitor's art to baffle,
And his wiles of changeful hue ;
Thence to draw the balm and healing
Whence the foe the poison drew.

Wherefore, in his season's fitness,
When the sacred years were spent,
Came the Son, the world's Creator,
From the Father's palace sent,
From the virgin's womb proceeding,
Flesh most pure and innocent.

Hear his cries, an Infant hidden
Where the narrow manger stands ;

See the Mother Maid his members
Wrapping in rude lowly bands :
See the cradle garments swathing
God's own feeble feet and hands !

Now, the thirty years accomplish'd
(All the time to flesh assigned),
With good-will, for therefore came He,
To His agony resign'd ;
In the cross our Lamb is lifted,
There the sacrifice they bind.

Wall and vinegar and spittle,
Reed and nails and lance, and lo !
Now the tender form is piercèd,
Now the Blood and Water flow !
Earth, and stars, and sky, and ocean
Will that cleansing river know.

Faithful Cross ! above all other,
One and only noble Tree !
None in foliage, none in blossom
None in fruit thy peer may be.
Sweetest wood, and sweetest iron,
Sweetest weight is hung on thee !

To the Trinity be glory
Everlasting, as is meet,
Equal to the Father, equal
To the Son and Paraclete;
Trinal unity, whose praises
All created things repeat.

K.

VIII.

A Risen Saviour.

The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now ;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that heaven affords
Is His, is His by right ;
The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
And heaven's eternal Light.

The joy of all who dwell above,
The joy of all below,
To whom He manifests His love,
And grants His name to know.

To them the Cross, with all its shame,
With all its grace, is given ;
Their name an everlasting name,
Their joy the joy of heaven.

They suffer with their Lord below,
They reign with Him above,
Their profit and their joy to know
The mystery of His love.

T. K.

Rom. viii. 24.

"We are saved by hope."

WITH reference to the salvation of God's children Scripture seems, at the first look, to contradict itself. Sometimes it represents our salvation as a fact which *has* taken place. "By grace," it says, "are ye saved;*" according to His mercy He *saved* us."† And sometimes, again, it speaks of our salvation as a future event. "Now," it says, "is our salvation nearer than when we believed," i.e. than when we became believers;‡ and it represents the believers as persons "who *shall* be heirs of salvation."§

This contradiction is merely apparent. The fact is, salvation is not merely one event, but a succession of events, a regular process which,

* Eph. ii. 8.

† Titus iii. 5.

‡ Rom. xiii. 11.

§ Heb. i. 14.

like everything that takes place in time, has its own history and development. It has a beginning, it has a time of growing, and it has its moment of maturity. So to the believer who finds himself in the middle of that process, there is a past as well as a future, a future as well as a past, with reference to his salvation. As long as we are here on earth, we are in the act of *being* saved; indeed, we are engaged in “*working out* our own salvation.”* Our salvation is a *work* which God “worketh in us,” and which we “work out with God;” but that work has to go through many stages before it can be finished. Much, however, is already done. With reference to this portion we *are* saved. Much is to be done still, and not until it is accomplished *shall* we be saved.

Hence Scripture, while gladdening us with the assurance that we *are* saved, at the same time, by grave exhortations, keeps us alive to the fact that only “he that shall endure to the end, shall be saved.”† It enjoins on us “to continue in the faith grounded and settled,

* Phil. ii. 12.

† Matt. xxiv. 13.

not to be moved away from the hope of gospel.”* It warns us “to give earnest to the things which we have heard, lest y time we should let them slip.”† These wise and kind counsels, indeed, of which re greatly in need during our pilgrimage e heavenly city. We ought to be thank-
the Holy Spirit for the faithfulness with h He keeps us in mind that we have not eached the end of our journey, and that onsequently ought not to sit down in idle- or lie down to sleep, but to walk on fastly; being awake to every emergency well armed against every enemy that may l us. For the world in which we live be compared to a vast desert, in which one who remains in it will surely perish. way, however, to the land of happiness, to the city of glory, goes through this t. Now Jesus, who knows the way, takes lead, and all who believe in Him follow Him. They form, as it were, a caravan ravelling company, of which He is the

* Col. i. 23.

† Heb. ii. 1.

himself *in salvation*; he may rightly and fully call out, “I *am* saved!” for of a truth this caravan cannot be lost. Still, he must not be such a fool as to overlook the fact that the caravan is *in progress*; that there are many days’ journeys still to come, on which many dangers will be certain to threaten the company. With reference to these future dangers, too, he will be right if he joyfully exclaims, “I *shall* be saved!” for it is not possible that the gates of hell should prevail against Christ and His Church. But the joyful traveller must at the same time, perceive that this future salvation will only be possible if he journeys with the caravan and does not linger, c

Our salvation through Jesus begins with the redemption of our *soul*, and ends in the redemption of our body. The moment we give ourselves up to Jesus our salvation has commenced. This is an act of the *soul* through faith, under the influence of God's Word and Spirit. It is a great work, for it is a work of God. Angels look at it with hallowed expectation, and the moment the act takes place they rejoice. A sinner's salvation has begun ! It is like the moment when a man who is about to be drowned catches hold of the rope that is thrown out to him. The link between that perishing soul and the life-boat is fixed. Many a painful hour may have to elapse still, and many a danger may have to be encountered before he will find himself comfortably seated in the happy circle of his family ; but all that will be met in due time, now that the *beginning* is made. The great act, before which nothing else could be done, has taken place. He is put in connection with the only power that can possibly save him.

It is a great and an astounding work viewed

from God's side. Nothing short of an incarnation of His Son, of a crucifixion of the Lamb of God, of a resurrection from the dead, was required to render salvation accessible to man. What powers of heaven, earth, and hell had to be moved before man could say, "My eyes have seen Thy salvation!" On man's side, on the contrary, the work seems quite simple. The message is brought to him that Jesus the Son of God hath come to save him. He believes it, and he is saved. Nothing can be more simple than this. A little child can go through with it.

Thus, when in a furious tempest people on shore notice a ship in distress, a great work is at once set agoing. In the dead of night, amidst the roaring storm, a noble band of the most powerful men jump into the boat of salvation, seize the oars in their strong grasp and begin the battle against the raging waves. Ten times they are driven back, ten times they dash onward again, now thrown upon the foaming mountains, now plunged down again into the boiling abysses, straining every nerve, stretching every muscle, till at length, after a

night's all but superhuman toil, they reach the spot where the wreck lies. They find a man hanging in the riggings. "Drop yourself!" they cry; and the next moment he is lying in their arms. What an astounding work on *their* part! What a simple act on the part of the *man*! Only one slight movement of his fingers—only the slackening of his grasp—and he is saved!

Such is the act of believing. The soul lets her own miserable props go, and drops into a loving Saviour's arms. A risen Christ, bearing the wounds of the cross in his body, stretches out his pierced and bloody hands, and cries, "Come unto me, thou lost one, and I will give thee rest!" A voice whispers into the soul, "Let loose what thou hast, and take hold of Him!" This word obeyed, salvation has begun.

It is a true beginning. It begins in the very root of man's being, in his *heart*, in his *soul*. It manifests itself to his consciousness in the form of a conviction which establishes itself in his soul without any compulsion whatever,

ways hitherto have been ways of per-
leading away from God, leading onw
death. He is convinced that *he* ought t
hung on the accursed tree and died in
He is convinced that henceforth he sh
die but live, because Jesus died for hi
this conviction he sees himself rescue
the wrath to come; he sees all his sins pa
by a merciful and just God; he sees the
that separated him from God filled u
the righteousness of Christ, and turne
an open way into heaven. He is con
that God truly and cordially loves hi
has reconciled him with Himself to be h
and his Father. The fear which h

is the soul is saved through faith. It is
separated from sin. It hates sin as much as
it had hitherto loved sin. It turns away from
the fear, because now it directs all its append-
ages and aspirations to Christ. It loves Christ.
It would always be with Him. It would wish to be taken up from
the world now and to be where Christ is. A
principle has entered the soul—a heaven-
spirit, a divine life, which cannot breathe
but in the atmosphere of God. It is the
“love” which, as the rising sun opens
the day with gold and purple, pours down
a stream of heavenly joy on the dawn of salva-

t; when the first impressions of the wonder-
of range have somewhat subsided, and the
sinner looks round him, he finds that he is
not yet in heaven, but on earth, in midst of
the desert; that, saved as he is, he continues
surrounded by innumerable dangers, for
of which he is in constant need of the
Saviour. Nay, he finds that a most important
part of his existence is still unsaved and wait-

ing for its redemption. This part, which is not yet saved, is his *body*. His soul is made free from sin, but his body is not. It continues a vile body.* It continues a mortal body. It continues a body of sin and death.† Its deeds are bad.‡ Its members harbour unclean passions.§ In its flesh dwelleth no good thing.|| Its senses are, as it were, so many open gates, through which the outer world with all its lusts and vanities freely enters.

With this sinful body the soul is closely connected. It does not merely wear this body as a man wears a cloak, which he may put off whenever he pleases; which only hangs loosely about him, and stands in no organic connection with his essence. The soul is, through God's creative power, so closely and intimately united with this body, that it forms one organic and living part of it. It cannot think one thought, nor speak one word, nor perform one action, without it. As the soul pervades the body, through all its nerves and fibres, even

* Phil. iii. 21. † Rom. vi. 6; vii. 24. ‡ Rom. viii. 13.

§ Col. iii. 5. || Rom. vii. 18.

into its remotest parts and innermost recesses, so the influences and impressions of the body permeate the soul all through its being. So, owing to this close union with the sinful body, the soul, so long as it dwells in it, is compelled permanently to continue in the immediate vicinity of sin, and in contact with a world that lies in the evil one. Through this body the soul constantly receives evil suggestions, carnal thoughts, false, perverse, and unclean impressions. Nor is it possible to foreknow the course which this body may take in its whimsical affections. Now, it is like an uncontrollable ship seized upon by a sudden gust of wind, ready to fly adrift upon the impetuous waves in any direction. Now, it is like a heavily-loaded cart on a sandy road, scarcely moveable, dragging back the horse and making the driver almost despair. The soul is engaged in hallowed devotion—and on a sudden some wicked thought may flash through the praying mind. The soul desires to listen to the Word of God; but soon it ceases to hear anything, for the body falls asleep. The soul desires to

meditate upon the invisible things; but, owing to some impression or other upon the senses, the thoughts rove away upon the cares and concerns of the day. The soul delights in meekness, in humility, in tolerance and peace; but on a sudden, at an unwatched moment, some provoking emergency stirs the blood into a ferment, something in the temperament makes the blood boil, and before you are aware of it, your mind is filled with anger, your mouth utters improper language, and you allow yourself to perform deeds which afterwards make you sink down in shame and remorse. Such are the moral sufferings which this body of sin inflicts upon the soul. And in addition to them come the countless afflictions that arise from indispositions, diseases, and pains, which remind us of the fact that the body of sin is also a body of death.

Now, it is quite true that a saved soul has wherewith to console itself in the midst of all these temptations, struggles, and sufferings. We have an High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In every battle

experience the faithful assistance of a divine comforter, who supports our courage and helps us the holy warfare of God. After every defeat, we find an Advocate with the Father, who is plenteous in forgiveness. In every affliction we know where to find the friend who wipes away the tears from our eyes. His faithful and unchangeable mercies deserve life and happiness to our soul, even amidst of the most distressing tribulations.—and this should not be overlooked—it is only a *relative* happiness, a happiness by anticipation, and in *hope*. All the consolations of Christ for his people rest upon the promise that their tribulations shall not be for ever; their “affliction is but for a moment;” to them there shall one day be “no more neither death, neither sorrow, neither pain.” This promise is absolutely essential to the consolations of Christ. This prospect is absolutely necessary to the present happiness of God’s redeemed children. Take away that prospect, and all Christ’s unspeakable gifts of grace and love to our souls come to nought. We read that

Paul and Silas could sing praises unto God at the dead of night, though they were thrown into the inner prison, their backs aching from the stripes they had received, and their feet fast in the stocks. We can understand their happiness, because we know that they were assured that shortly they would exchange that dismal condition for everlasting glory. But, suppose a heavenly messenger had made his appearance to tell them that they were never to get out of the prison, but were to remain in that same condition to all eternity, what would have become of all their happiness and peace and joy? Surely their hymns would have been stopped at once, never to be sung again. Christ, with all his love, and atoning grace, and sanctifying power, would have been of no use to them. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ," the Apostle says, "we are of all men most miserable."

Indeed, it is only through the certainty of our future salvation that our present salvation can have any meaning to us. We *are* saved, because it is a fact that we *shall* be saved.

nsiderable and essential part of our exist-
is still “subject to vanity, and to the
age of corruption.”* Our saved soul,
enclosed in this vile body, deeply partici-
- in the feelings of “the whole creation
groaneth and travaileth in pain together
now; yearning to be delivered from the
age of corruption.”† We look eagerly
ard to that glorious period when “the
of God shall be manifested.” And when
that period be, when the wonderful event
take place which is described as “the
option of our body?”‡

E REDEMPTION: not the annihilation.
an philosophy may describe man’s futurity
state of incorporality; heathenish igno-
may tell us that after death we shall con-
as bodiless spirits, as “manes” or ghosts.
tianity, taught by the Spirit of God,
such doctrines. It is true, that all we
ee with our eyes, after the departure of a
soul, is the destruction of his body, a de-

* Rom. viii. 20, 21.

† Rom. viii. 22.

‡ Rom. viii. 23.

composition of it into atoms. It seems quite absurd to suppose that, after such a process of pulverization, another body should rise out of the dust of this destroyed one. But faith does not base its expectations upon that which is seen with the eyes, but upon the word of the invisible God, who, as He “framed the worlds by His word, and made things which are seen not of things which do appear,”* is also mighty to call forth our bodies from their dust, and to restore a glorious building out of the ashes of the destroyed one. It is fruitless labour to reason with naturalists and materialists as to *how* such a restitution may be effected. We may point to analogous transformations in the present creation, such as the wonderful change of the chrysalis into the butterfly, or the development of the grain of wheat into the blade that springs up from it. But even these natural types of our future resurrection are mysteries, which we see but do not understand. How, then, should we be able to explain the mystery of the transmutation of our natural

* Heb. xi. 3.

bodies into spiritual bodies? A child, if it happens to look into the laboratory of a great chemist, will scarcely believe its own eyes when it witnesses the marvellous transformations which human science there calls forth. But what else is the greatest chemist but a child when he looks into the great laboratory of creation in which He labours, who "by his working is able even to subdue all things to himself?"

The resurrection of the body seems such an impossibility to man, who only relies upon the testimony of his senses, that it is no wonder that mankind, after it had withdrawn from the teaching of God, unanimously rejected the idea of it as being utterly absurd. Even to the friends of God in the Old Testament, the resurrection only appeared like a distant object, dimly seen through the shadows of the night. That God was mighty to save and to cleanse the soul, to blot out sin and to renew the spirit, was joyfully believed; but that He also would restore the body after death was, it is true, not disbelieved, though neither was it

enthusiastically proclaimed. The idea seemed too chimerical to be realised.

But we have seen the first born of the dead, and He has cleared away all the mists that dimmed the vision of them of old time. "Jesus," the Gospel proclaims, "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and *incorruptibility* to light.* The eternal *life* of the soul; the everlasting *incorruptibility* of the body. The question whether it is possible that a body sown in corruption, in dishonour, and in weakness may rise again in incorruption, in glory, in power, is no longer problematic. The resurrection of such a body is a fact. We have seen it with our eyes! We have handled it! "Remember," the Apostle enjoins his disciples, "remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel!"†

Nor did Jesus rise merely for his own soul's sake, but for ours. His resurrection guarantees

* 2 Tim. i. 10. Not *immortality*, as the authorised version has it, incorrectly. *Aphtharsia*, not *Athanasia*.

† 2 Tim. ii. 8.

the resurrection of all who fall asleep in Him, as well as the wonderful change from corruptibility into incorruption, of those believers who will be alive at His second coming.* Without His resurrection ours would be impossible, just as the stream is impossible without the spring from which it flows, or as the tree with its branches and fruits is impossible without the root from which it springs. As everything in God's creation obeys the divine law of development, so does our resurrection. As through the law of development the whole fallen human race received its body from one head, Adam; so will the saved human race receive their bodies from another head, Jesus, the second Adam. And as, owing to that natural process of development, we now are bearing the image of the earthly Adam, so also through a similar process we shall bear the image of the heavenly.† When Jesus appears, we shall be like Him‡ just as we are now like Adam, who begat children in his own likeness, after his image.§

* 1 Cor. xv. 51. † 1 Cor. xv. 49. ‡ 1 John iii. 2.

§ Gen. v. 3.

This is a wonderful revelation of God. It shows that everywhere and at all times He is himself; a lover of His own eternal laws, which He never forsakes, whether labouring in the spiritual or in the natural creation. On the great day of the resurrection our spirits will not be clothed upon by some heterogeneous covering, brought from afar and thrown upon us in the manner of a cloak. Such a representation of the resurrection is as much at variance with nature as it is with Scripture. God never acts in such an abrupt and arbitrary manner. He "giveth to every seed his body,"* and to every body its seed, from which it springs up according to the rules of its nature. That seed, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain, contains the living germ from which the new body is to issue forth. When sown into the earth, part of that seed decays, but the living germ remains and shoots up in due time in a visible bodily form. Thus, through faith in the risen Saviour, our present bodies have received their living germ from Him. Through

* 1 Cor. xv. 38.

His incarnation He partook of our earthly, mortal body; through regeneration, *i.e.* through faith in Him, we have become partakers of the nature of His resurrection body, that, as in *our* body He died, so in *His* body we should live. This "great mystery" was revealed to us when the Apostle wrote to the believing church: "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."* No wonder then that, our bodies being pregnant with this heavenly germ, we shall rise from our graves in His likeness, as His images.† It will then be shown that regeneration through faith in Jesus is something more than a mere change of a man's ideas, opinions, and desires; something more indeed than a mere purification of his moral principles, or a rectification of his religious sentiments, such as might have been brought about by any inspired teacher. It will be shown that regeneration is the impregnation of man with a new nature, not only spiritual but also bodily; that, from the seed of Christ, which is His word,‡ a new *creature*

* Eph. v. 30. † 1 Cor. xv. 49. ‡ 1 Peter i. 23.

has sprung up in the believer, a new *man*,* who one day will manifest himself in a tangible human form as a child of God, which both as to body and spirit is born of God, through Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.† “God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,” says the Apostle, “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.‡ Jesus not only *gives* the resurrection; He *is* the resurrection.

This is our salvation. They that are in Christ shall live though they were dead. We learn from Scripture that there are two resurrections, the one of life, the other of damnation.§ It seems that man *must* rise again some day. Whether he be in Christ, or without Christ, a resurrection of his body is inevitable. Reproduction of the body seems to be a law laid down in human nature, just as it is a law in the nature of the tree to reproduce its foliage after the death-sleep of winter. It is Christ who shall call up the whole human race. All that

* 2 Cor. v. 17; Col. iii. 10.

† Col. ii. 9.

‡ 1 Peter i. 3.

§ John v. 29.

are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.* But those in whom, through unbelief, the seed of Christ never germinated, shall rise in their own unclean nature to be given up to the judgment of Him who is able to destroy both soul and body.† It is from that fearful fate that we are saved who “have life in us, because we have eaten His flesh, and drunk His blood.” For His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed, and the man that eateth Him shall live by Him.‡ Thus the thief, who hung by His side, was saved, when turning towards Christ he nourished himself through faith with that life-giving bread. Only a “Lord, remember me!” had to be sent up to the Prince of Life who was hanging by his side, and the new creature was born in him, which one day will rise from the grave, changed into the image of Him from whom it sprang, in glory incorruptible.

Let us give praise unto Him who so unspeakably loved us as to secure such a prospect for us even at the cost of His blood. We know

* John v. 28.

† Matt. x. 28.

‡ John vi. 53—57.

from experience the miseries that arise from a sinful, vile, and defective body. Who shall describe to us the beatitudes which will thrill through our spirits, when we shall walk before the face of God in such a pure, and perfect, and glorious body as Jesus is living in now ! It will be a spiritual body.* Infidels laugh at this expression. They call it a contradiction in terms, because they believe that the spiritual excludes the corporeal. But Scripture teaches the contrary. It is true, it tells us that there are spirits who seem to have no bodies, but it represents them as "unclean spirits."† The clean, happy spirits are everywhere represented as "not naked, but clothed upon" with bodies. The angels are "ministering spirits," but they have bodies. Our Lord is called "the quickening Spirit," but He has a body. That body, it is true, is possessed of capacities which our natural bodies have not; but it is a real body, so much so that it is capable of presenting itself to the touch of our natural bodies in a substan-

* 1 Cor. xv. 44.

† Mark v. 2.

tial form. The Lord said after His resurrection to His disciples, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."* By saying so, He did not deny that He was a spirit, but He denied that He was a ghost, a phantom, which His troubled disciples took Him for. They supposed "that they had seen a spirit" in the sense of an unclean, incorporeal demon.† To cure them of that superstitious error, the Lord allowed them to handle Him, that they might see that He was a good spirit clothed upon with a human body. Such, it appears, is the wonderful nature of the spiritual body. It can render itself visible or invisible to the natural eye, tangible or intangible to the natural touch, just as the indwelling spirit wills. It can eat and drink, as natural bodies do, and it can also live without eating or drinking. It is the realisation of the highest idea of corporality. It is a perfect dwelling and vehicle for a perfect spirit. It puts no obstacles in the way of the spirit who inhabits it. It is perfectly in unity with

* Luke xxiv. 39.

† Luke xxiv. 37.

that spirit, harmoniously co-operating with it in all its movements and actions. It knows of no impediments or restraints. It is not *compelled* to be invisible. It is not *compelled* to abstain from food. It is fit for moving in all the spheres of the universe, in the lowest as well as in the highest. It can sit down with men on earth at their meals,* and it can sit on the throne of glory in the highest heaven. Its moving power is quick as the light. Even the bodies of angels manifest such an astounding velocity. This was one day witnessed by Daniel the prophet. He knelt down to pray, and before he had finished his prayer, the angel Gabriel, "being caused to fly swiftly," was standing by his side to bring him God's answer.† In a few minutes that spirit had traversed all the distance between the heaven of heavens and the earth! If an angel, who is only a *ministering* spirit, is able thus to reduce distance almost to nought, what will they be able to do "for whom they minister!" Human science points to its hissing, rattling

* Gen. xviii. 8.

† Dan. ix. 21.

steam-engine, by which it enables a man to travel sixty miles an hour. One day it will be seen that the simple faith in Jesus goes far beyond all science, even in that of mechanism and locomotion. "*All things are yours,*" the Spirit saith, "*for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*"

Indeed, this is salvation! By the light of such a redemption of your body, you see yourself as a person saved out of every danger that threatened it with destruction; you see yourself projected into eternity, to realise the highest beatitude a perfect and loving spirit is capable of enjoying. You will perhaps bear another name than you have now; your circumstances, your enjoyments, your labours, will be different from the present, but you will be the same person, the same individual which you are now. You will be recognisable from the features of your face, from the sound of your voice,* from the whole character of your personality, which used to single you out as an individual from other

* John xx. 16.

individuals. You will be recognised by those who knew and loved you in Jesus here upon earth, and you too will recognise them. They will be just the same to you as they always were, and yet, how wonderfully, how gloriously changed ! You will say, “ When on earth there were so many whom I dearly loved ; ” but you will not have to ask in a sad tone, “ Where are they now ? ” There they are, all of them, each his own self again, but bearing in special forms, peculiar to each, the common image of Him from whom all have received their new life and nature. Oh, what a society ! How will they all, upon finding each other again, burst out into one shout, “ Saved ! Saved for ever ! Glory be to God and the Lamb ! ” And no more sin—no more death—no more any such things as sorrow and grief, and pains and tears ! All these will be left behind for ever ! And in the midst of that company who have all knelt down in adoration and rapture He will stand, whose name is—Jesus—Saviour !

ARISE, my soul ! awake from sleep,
Behold thy Saviour's grave ;
His loved ones mourning laid Him deep
In Death's devouring cave :
But from the tomb He valiant came,
And ever blessed be His name.

A cheering sound, an angel's voice
Proclaimeth from on high,—
Our brother, Jesus—O rejoice !—
Could not Death's captive lie :
But from the tomb He valiant came,
And ever blessed be His name.

O sacred day, sublimest day !
O mystery unheard !
Death's hosts that claimed Him as their prey
He scattered with a word :
And from the tomb He valiant came,
And ever blessed be His name.

O holy, holy Paschal morn !
We triumphed have through thee :
Thou sweetenest Christ's tortures borne
Upon the fatal tree :

For from the tomb He valiant cam
And ever blessed be His name.

I boldly now defy thee, Death !
For thou hast lost thy sting ;
Defy, O Hell ! thy blasting breath
All terrors thou canst bring :
For from the tomb He valiant cam
And ever blessed be His name.

The grave is dark, the grave is col
And I must slumber there :
But, risen, I shall Christ behold,
Christ's glories I shall share :
For from the tomb He valiant cam
And ever blessed be His name.

That I a welcome warm may win
From Jesus in the skies,
From the foul sepulchre of sin
May I as valiant rise,
As from the tomb the Saviour cam
Christ ! ever blessed be Thy name

IX.

A Living Saviour.

PRAISE be to God on high !
The triumph hour is near ;
The Lord hath won the victory,
The foe is vanquished here.

Dark grave, yield up the dead,
Give up thy prey, thou Earth ;
In death He bowed His sacred head,—
He springs anew to birth !

Sharp was the wreath of thorns
Around His suffering brow ;
But glory rich His head adorns,
And Angels crown Him now.

Hail, hail, all hail !
The Lord is risen indeed !
The curse is made of none avail,
The sons of men are freed !

Col. iii. 4.

"Christ, who is our life."

THOUGH in one sense Adam was "the figure" of Christ,* yet, in another he was His reverse. After having ruined us through his disobedience he died, never to be heard of any more. Of him, as of all other heads of generations and families, it may be said what the prophet said of the fathers of his people: "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not."† It is true, though they are dead, yet they live, but they only live "unto God," not unto us.‡ To us they are for the present dead. But with reference to Christ the prophet uses a different language. "Doubtless," he says, "Thou art our Father; Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer. Thy name is from everlasting!" He pro-

* Rom. v. 14. † Isa. lxiii. 16. ‡ Luke xx. 38.

died ; but, unlike them, He returned again, to pursue the great work of our salvation. *He* is not ignorant of us. *He* acknowledges us even now. “I am with you.” He said, “even unto the end of the world.”

A precious treasure of consolation and encouragement is contained in the truth that Jesus continues in direct and immediate connection with each one of us, as “a friend who loveth at all times, and as a brother in every adversity.” Though separated from us by the preservation of our senses, yet He is never separated from our heart and life. He is not only absent for a time. But in His presence we are never absent from Him. He is very present in virtue of that divine

We should be sure to perish were He prevented from being continually with us. All He had done on earth for our salvation would have been done in vain, if He could not continue the work of saving us in heaven. But, glory be to God, we are assured of the contrary. "If, when we were enemies," the Apostle says, "we were reconciled to God by the *death* of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His *life*."^{*}

By His *life*. Not merely by His doctrine. Not merely by the pattern of perfect morality which He set before us when on earth. Not even by that religious institution called "the Church," of which He is the founder. Our Saviour is not a thing, but a person ; not an inanimate system of truths and precepts, of forms and rites, but a living Being who heareth prayer and doeth wonders. All other founders and teachers of religious systems could do nothing more than proclaim a doctrine and organize a society based upon that doctrine. But this is exactly the reason why they all of

* Rom. v. 10.

them are unable to save. There are a good many truths in the doctrine of Mohammed, nor is everything wrong that is found in the religion of Zoroaster, of Confucius, and others. But Mohammed, Zoroaster, and Confucius are dead, and we do not know what has become of them. And whether they know what has become of their doctrine, and of those who had accepted it, is very doubtful. There is no other connection between them and their friends than that of reverential and grateful memory on the part of the latter. They imparted their opinions, ideas, suppositions, and expectations, to their friends, but they could not impart life to them. They could provide their friends with a religious system, but they could not cause that system to strike root in the hearts of men, nor could they protect that system against the destructive influences of subsequent times. They could leave behind an honourable or sacred remembrance of their name, words, and deeds, but they could not present themselves to their friends as the permanent objects of their love,

as the ground of their hopes, as their constant guides and protectors through all ages and in all trials. They could, through their teaching, in a certain measure enlighten the religious understanding, or refine the religious sense of their followers ; but they could not make them new men, with whom they could promise to continue in the most intimate fellowship beyond death and the grave. Being unable to come back from the grave, they could not give to their friends any certainty of their help after their death. And, having themselves been unable to walk farther than the gulf of corruption, they had it not in their power to secure to others a place on its opposite shore.

Nor can we derive any greater profit from Christ, if Christianity is to us nothing more than a system of doctrines, precepts, and rites, proceeding from a teacher who left this earth some eighteen centuries ago. Pure, highly moral and sublime, as that system may be, it will leave us dead and unsaved if we disconnect it from the living person of Jesus himself. A man may easily acquire a knowledge of

Christian doctrine, and adapt his manner of living to the rules prescribed by a Christian church, and he may deem himself to be a Christian on account of these things. But there is no connection of love and gratitude between his soul and the now living person of Jesus, he is in truth as little a saved Christian as a Mohammedan or a Jew. He may, with reference to the present life, be a more or less better enlightened, or a more civilised man; but as far as his salvation is concerned, he is as dead to it as if he were a disciple of the Koran or of the Talmud. Where the soul of man unto salvation is sought in a *doctrine* and not in a *person*, it matters little whether that doctrine be called Gospel, or Koran, or Talmud, because they are all of them equally powerless. He who, in that case, tries to establish himself as his own Saviour by means of that doctrine, has a more hopeless plan cannot be imagined. A man might just as well try to set a train in motion by endeavouring to shift the pistons of a steam-engine up and down with its little hands. The *doctrine*, even that of the gospel, works not.

mere human power, becomes a law, and nothing but death can result from that experiment, for the law worketh no salvation, but wrath.* For it is not the outward form or appearance of the work that can save, but the inward principle from which it proceeds. Now, the only saving principle is the love of Christ, because it involves the nature, the life, the power of Christ. All other love is insufficient. But the man who tries to save himself by doctrines, by precepts, by rites, works from love to self, from love to men, from love of honour, in short, from any love save from love to Christ. He cannot possibly live, but must die. For it is impossible that Adam should rise unto life again, if only decked with the ornaments of Christ's love, and not quickened by the power of Christ's Spirit.

Even the visible creation teaches us that there is a power in the inborn instinct of nature, which there is not in the effects of instruction. A man may through teaching and exercise acquire remarkable ability in the art

* Rom. iv. 15.

of swimming, but his skill, though ever so amazing, will always be a poor thing if compared with the movements even of a new-born little fish. Not that instruction and education are needless. In the sphere of the [rational and spiritual life no innate talent is given to man, which is not given with the understanding and under the condition that it should be developed under the influence of teaching and exercise. But where the innate talent is lacking, art will never be able to make up for defect of nature. Its productions may be admirable imitations of life, but they will never be life itself. They are dead, owing to the fact that they are brought about by a dead power from *without* and do not grow out of the living spirit from *within*. Thus, a religious life carried on apart from a personal connection with a living Jesus, may excite admiration by its apparently correct conformity with the maxims, the precepts, and the institutions of Christ; but to the spiritual examiner it will betray a lack of that instinctive aversion to sin, and of *that* warm-hearted love of God, the godly, and

the good, which are essential to the salvation of man, not merely from some forms or effects of evil, but from evil itself. An artificial Christianity, because it is art and not life, may appear to be dead unto sin, but it can never manifest itself as living unto God.

Now Jesus has saved those who with a living faith believe in Him, by causing them to be born again. He has imparted to us His own nature which died unto sin and lives unto God. The life of that nature presupposes *His* life. He liveth *in* us.* If He were dead, His nature in us could not live; it would die too. Thus our Adamic nature must die, because Adam, from whom we received it, is dead. But Jesus liveth, and so we live in and through Him. There is a constant and indissoluble connection between Him and the new creature which He has called to life in us. He loves us as His own—as the head loves the members, as the husband loves the wife. He nourisheth and cherisheth us out of the fulness of His own life, being continuously active to supply us with all

* Gal. ii. 20.

us, to dwell in us, teaching and training, strengthening with tender-hearted care the Christ who is *within* us, that He be ‘in us,’ and grow up “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ” who is *without* us; so that at the great day of the revelation of the chi- God, we all come to stand before God, perfect, full-grown images of His Son, spot and wrinkle, to the joy and glory of the Father.

Indeed, we consciously experience the power of these operations of the Spirit in us from time to time when we realise to ourselves the close and intimate connection in which we, as sons,

heaven-born kindred of Him who died for sin. Nor can anything inspire us with a deeper conviction of our holiness than does the celestial delight that thrills through our whole mind, when, in the hour of devotional seclusion, we soar up on the wings of prayer, and feel ourselves, in our hallowed imagination, placed before Him who sitteth on the throne by the right hand of God, to whom we may speak as a brother speaks to his brother, and as a man to his friend, face to face and from the heart to the heart. We feel there are streams of love flowing from Him unto us and from us back unto Him—a union which nothing is mighty to break—a fellowship from which nothing can separate us. We feel that it is a living and loving Saviour with whom we are conversing, whom we cannot see now, but whom we expect to see soon, when the thin veil which is between Him and us, but through which we almost feel the breath of his lips pass, will be wholly removed. It is in that fellowship we so impressively experience that our salvation is a reality. Nothing can be more remote

from us than, in these moments, is the idea of the possibility of such a thing as our being lost. It comes as little into our minds as does the idea that Christ might be lost. We are His and He is ours. His life is our life. Who can destroy it? It passed through death and hell, and, lo, it fills the heaven with its glory!

Once, when He was on earth, that divine life of His was hid within the veil of the vile body which He had adopted for our sakes. It seemed weak. It seemed to break down and to die. But on the morning of the resurrection it manifested itself in all the fulness of its power and glory, breaking up the pavement of death, and making all principalities and powers stand in awe of the splendour of its majesty. And again is His life concealed from the inspection of man, being screened beyond the veil of the clouds, where it will continue hid in God, till it will manifest itself in all the beauty of its holiness and the brightness of its glory on the great day of His appearance.

Thus too His life is hid in us and our life is hid with Him in God. We cannot show it

except to those who have eyes to see it; who can discern the beauties of the spirit resplendent through the veil of the flesh. We can show no other form than that of a worm creeping in the dust; we are like the grass that withereth, and like flowers that are cut off. Soon we shall bow our heads under the iron hand of death. We shall seem to break down in weakness, in dishonour, in corruption. But behind these forms of weakness and death there lives within us a life which cannot die, a creature which cannot perish, because it is "planted together" with Him who *was* dead but liveth and dieth no more, as death hath no more dominion over Him. So to us also there shall be a resurrection morning, and the life of Christ, which is hid in us now, shall rise up in the brightness of His glory, because it issued forth from Him. It is by His Spirit that "welleth in us" that our mortal bodies shall be quickened.* As little as it was possible that He should be holden of death, so little will it be possible that death should hold us. We

* Rom. viii. 11.

may be sunk down “into the lowest the earth ;” but come up again we power and glory, because our life is t: Him that sitteth on the highest throi universe. But it must all wait till t day when all things shall be made ne when Christ, who is our life, shall a shall also appear with him in glory.*

And He who liveth *in* us, also li us. To be a perfect Saviour to us, He accompanies us through all the strug vicissitudes to which our life here subject. We should through faith re great truth to ourselves at every mom life. . We, alas, often live without] He never liveth without us. He ne looks the fact which we so often that till the last moment of our ea we are surrounded by dangers and tl by enemies. And, for most part, w know those dangers and enemies because we are often misled by tl fulness of our own hearts, and pa

* Col. iii. 4.

cause our power of vision is confined within the limits of our senses. No day passes by on which temptation does not present sin to us in the form of profit or pleasure. Jesus knows how prone we are to allow ourselves to be caught in that snare. It is He who at such moments rouses our conscience through His Spirit. It is He who causes a friend to step in, or a sermon to be heard, or a tract to be put into our hands, very often just at the moment when we are about to yield to the weakness of the flesh. His protection is invisible, scarcely discernible, yet powerful, wise, seasonable, faithful. When He saves us from an imminent danger, that salvation seems to be merely accidental; but on subsequent and mature reflection we gratefully discover His invisible hand in the circumstances which have presented our fall. Such a discovery should impel us to commit our daily life all the more urgently to His protecting care. We should accustom ourselves constantly to feel ourselves in His company; as that good old woman did, who had got into the habit of walking always

on one side of the road "because," she said, "she always thought she ought to leave room for the Lord who was walking by her side."

Such a "living with Jesus" is indispensable for our salvation. We are taught that he who is born of God can never be lost; but this doctrine can only be true in connection with another doctrine—that he who has received the life *from* Christ, cannot cease to live *with* Christ. A man's living *with* Jesus is the only genuine evidence of his life *from* Jesus; just as a man's living with sin is the only justifiable ground for doubting as to whether he ever received any life from Christ at all. Many a one may be found who seems to suppose that the life which he believes to have received through regeneration can live by virtue of its own vitality, although separated from the person of Jesus. Such a supposition is as absurd as it would be to suppose that a river can continue to flow if it be cut off from its source. A religious form of living maintained on that supposition is "dead orthodoxy, dead formalism," which is worse

than profligacy, because it is hypocrisy; it is living in sin under the name of being alive in Christ. For if a man does not live with Christ, he must live with sin, since there is no third thing given to live with. It is true, the sins in which persons of that character live, are, as a rule, not of the grossest kind. They are more "filthiness of the spirit," than "filthiness of the flesh." They are secret sins, indoor sins; they are what might be called "respectable sins," such as love of money, pride of life, ambition, &c. They are sins of omission rather than of commission, such as lovelessness, unkindness, lukewarmness, and indifference. But the more refined these sins are, the more dangerous they will prove, because of their illusory character. There is always danger in sin, no matter whether it tempts an infidel or a regenerated man. It is to be doubted whether a man, who thinks that there is for him no danger in sin, because he is regenerated, has experienced anything of regeneration at all. It is exactly because he can see nothing but death and destruction in

sin, that the truly regenerated child of God clings all the closer to Jesus. Only *there*, by the side of that Saviour, is there truth in the saying, that sin can do him no harm, because it is only there that it cannot reach him. It is also true that, though being caught in the snares of sin, he yet will not perish. But this is only true with the understanding that he will be extricated again out of these snares by Jesus. In ourselves, we have nothing that can save us. All our salvation is in Christ.

This adage is contradicted by those who hold that man has enough in his own conscience to keep himself on the right way. This would be true, if conscience were incapable of erring. But conscience itself is in need of an unchangeable standard to direct it. A good compass is an invaluable object to a sailor; but what if the compass gets out of order? Happy man, if he can see the Polar Star which never moves from its place, whatever may happen with the compass! Such a star is Jesus in the firmament of the spiritual life. A conscience which points to Him is sure to be in good order.

Conscience may be misled, but He cannot be deceived. In every case we should test the injunctions of our conscience by what we know of the nature and character of Christ. Conscience may, for instance, tell us that persecution is a duty; but if we go to Jesus and ask Him about the matter, He will tell us that He often was persecuted, but never did persecute himself. Conscience may assure us that such and such practices are lawful, that such and such amusements are harmless; but if we ask Jesus whether He could indulge in those practices or enjoy those amusements, the answer will often be the contrary. To live conscientiously may be to live altogether wrongly; for it is possible conscientiously to walk in a way of destruction. The only security of being guarded against error and to obtain salvation, is to live conscientiously with Jesus.

We have no conception of the magnitude of the mercy which is contained in the fact that Jesus liveth with us, and, as a faithful shepherd, never moves from our side. We, in our short-sightedness, often think that there is no

danger; but if we only for one moment saw what He sees, our hearts would fail us for fear. We do not know who they are who constantly encompass us about like wasps, ready to kill us with their venomous stings. The world which we see is already by itself dangerous enough for us, yet it is only a little speck of dust swimming in the midst of other worlds which surround it, peopled with “principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and spiritual wickednesses in high places,”* each of which is stronger than all of us taken together. Some effects of their operations were seen in the unspeakable and horrible miseries of those unhappy individuals out of whom Jesus, when on earth, “cast devils and unclean spirits.” It is owing to Him who came to destroy the work of the devil that, since His appearance amongst us, such manifestations of the power of darkness have become by far less numerous. Since He founded His church on earth, we may believe that countless hosts of good angels have been stationed in our vicinity, all sent forth to

* Eph. vi. 12.

minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. It is Jesus who sendeth them, who, as their sovereign captain, appoints to each his place, and constantly keeps them on the watch and in arms, to ward off the legions that threaten to destroy us, or the tempter whose cunning devices would be too much for us. If He did not thus as a living Saviour accompany us on our journey through life, most assuredly this earth of ours would be a dwelling-place of devils, and our bodies temples of unclean spirits. Of all this we now observe scarcely anything, because we only see that which is before our eyes. But one day, when we, too, shall have organs to see the world of the spirits, we shall know *what* it is from which Jesus has saved us; and we shall be able to realise the meaning of that saying of Scripture, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under *your* feet shortly.”*

And as He liveth *with* us, so He also liveth *for* us, that He should save us to the uttermost, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us.† We learn from Scripture that man is

* Rom. xvi. 20.

† Heb. vii. 25.

not permitted to approach God except through a mediator. Thus Israel had no access to the thrice holy Jehovah except through the mediation of the high priest, who with the blood of atonement entered the sanctuary, which was the dwelling-place of God on earth. But a merely human high priest who was himself a sinner, and entered the sanctuary not with human blood, but with the blood of an animal, could only symbolize the true Mediator between God and man. The true dwelling-place of God is not on earth within the curtains, but in the heaven of heavens, in the light which no man can approach unto. The true Mediator is not a fallen man, but the God-man, who since He is as really God as He is a man, links God and man together in indissoluble union. He entered that heavenly sanctuary with His own blood, and has ever since been constantly before the face of God as the Lamb of God, wounded and bruised for the sins of men. He bears in His body the print of the nails which He received when He was sacrificed on earth as a sin-offering for us. Thus, by His present life in

heaven, He perpetuates the propitiation which He made for us when on earth. Our High Priest is continuously in the sanctuary performing the things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for our sins. And we who are on earth are continuously living under the atoning influence and power of the blood, which having once been shed for our trespasses, was carried up to heaven to be constantly sprinkled down upon our souls.

And we are in need of that permanent propitiation; for every day we offend in many things. True, as it is, that the life which through faith we have received from Christ is holy and divine, yet it is equally true that, in spite of it, we suffer many a sad and shameful defeat in our struggle against the flesh and the world. We should not conceal from ourselves the fact that we are responsible for these defeats. This was justly perceived by an old experienced Christian, when one day a man of the Antinomian stamp, whose name was John Baker, observed in his presence, "that, since through regeneration he had become a new

man in Christ, he did not trouble him much about his sins, as these were committed by his old man, who, of course, could not anything else but sin," &c. Upon this old patriarch said, " Well, I know it is so 'Put ye off the old man and put ye on new man.'* But could you tell me who the *ye* is, who here is addressed?" Whereupon the Antinomian was not quite ready with his answer, the old man continued: "I will tell you. It is John Ball. And, mind, he will be held responsible all the mischief he allows his old man to commit."

This is as scriptural as it is sound common sense. Sin is sin, whether committed by a Christian or by an infidel. The holy just God cannot hold him guiltless who trespasses against His divine commandments, least of all such a trespasser as knows his Lord's will so well. It is true that guilt can be moved, but only in the way of atonement. Nor should we deceive ourselves by supposing

* Eph. iv. 22, 24.

the new life which is in us can make atement for the sins which we commit through the power of the old. Sin cannot be atoned for by any life, nor by any deed, feeling, sentiment, however hallowed it may be, but only by the blood of Christ. Let us not suppose that an improper expression which comes from our lips will be forgiven on the ground that we prayed in the Spirit of Christ an hour ago. Let us not think that an injustice which we do to one man will be winked at by the Divine Judge because we showed Christian sympathy to another. The new life which we received through Christ is not given to us as a license to sin. Though the fruits of sinfulness which we yield through the body be ever so many, they will even if taken together be insufficient to save us from the judgment to come, which we have deserved by a single offence. "My little children," the apostle says, "these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our

sins.”* The Apostle does not say, ‘an advocate in ourselves,’ but ‘Father.’ He points away from us heaven, where Jesus is sitting with of the nails and the wound of the spe body. “*He*,” he says, “is the propi our sins.”

There is an unspeakable amount o tion and encouragement in this preci to those whose sincere and cordial c *not to sin*. It is they who feel the ut lessness of any appeal to the good w have done through Christ to cover and shame of their shortcomings. that nothing can set them to rest sav and faithfulness of that Mediator, w between them and God ; who, as a M came short in anything, and shed His the good of those who come short in ev To Him we go to speak about every w which we have afresh spoiled the spe ment with which He clothed us, & doing so, we know that we do not &

* 1 John ii. 1.

imaginary being, but a living Saviour, an High Priest, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, as He was in all points tempted like as we are ; and who, as a competent advocate, is fully able to plead our case even seventy times seven times a day. And when to Him we “confess our sins, we know that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

How should it be possible that we should continue to hold fast the salvation which we once received, if we were not assured that the blood which alone causes the angel of perdition to pass by our door is constantly present before the face of God ? What seems to be so endless and hopeless as a Christian’s battle against the flesh, the world, and the devil ! We have to deal with enemies within and without—enemies which are sure to hold on with unabated obstinacy to the last moment of our life. We know, alas ! from the most bitter experiences, that it would be absurd to expect a day in our life on which we shall not sin.

* 1 John i. 9.

How could we under these circumstances with such a prospect before us, keep up our spirit if we had to believe that, with every defeat that will occur, our salvation will be gone? We should sink down in despair, throw away our arms, and, comfortless, ourselves up to our enemy to be forced into slavery. To be able to continue combatting day after day and year after year, in need of the assurance that we *shall* prevail in the end, if only we persevere, not giving up the fight. Tell a soldier that the defeat which he has suffered is irreparable, that his loss is irreparable, and that he can never conquer. Tell him, on the contrary, that he will be sure to carry away the crown at the end if only he fights on, renewing the battle after every defeat, rising up from every fall, giving no quarter to his enemy and no quarter to himself—and you will see his victories increasing with his strength. It is that assurance which gives him strength to fight and to prevail. This is the man's full assurance of success of victory if he only faints not, by the way, which

him to ever-renewed endeavour. He knows he has a leader, a Captain, who has never failed those who trusted in Him; and in the moment of direst-seeming failure, he once more girds up his loins, and goes forward, with a song in his heart and the words on his lips—"Succour and save me, for Thou art my only hope and refuge, my Lord and my God,—

JESUS—SAVIOUR!"

My Saviour, on Thy word of truth
In earnest hope I live;
I ask for all the precious things
Thy boundless love can give.
I look for many a lesser light
About my path to shine,
But chiefly long to walk with Thee,
And only trust in Thine.

In holy expectation held,
Thy strength my heart shall stay,

For Thy right hand will never let
My trust be cast away.
Yea, Thou hast kept me on my feet
In many a deadly strife,
By the stronghold of hope in Thee,
The hope of endless life.

Thou knowest that I am not blest
As Thou wouldest have me be,
Till all the peace and joy of faith
Possess my soul in Thee!
And still I seek 'mid many fears
With yearnings unexprest,
The comfort of Thy strengthening
Thy soothing, settling rest.

It is not as Thou wilt with me,
Till, humbled in the dust,
I know no place in all my heart
Wherein to put my trust.
Until I find, O Lord, in Thee,
The lowly and the meek
That fulness which Thy own redeemer
Go nowhere else to seek.

When, O my Saviour, on my soul,
Cast down, but not dismayed,
Still be Thy chastening, healing hand
In tender mercy laid.
And while I wait for all Thy joys,
My yearning heart to fill,
Teach me to walk and work with Thee
And at Thy feet sit still.

A. L. W.

THE END.



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